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NOV. 1, 2004

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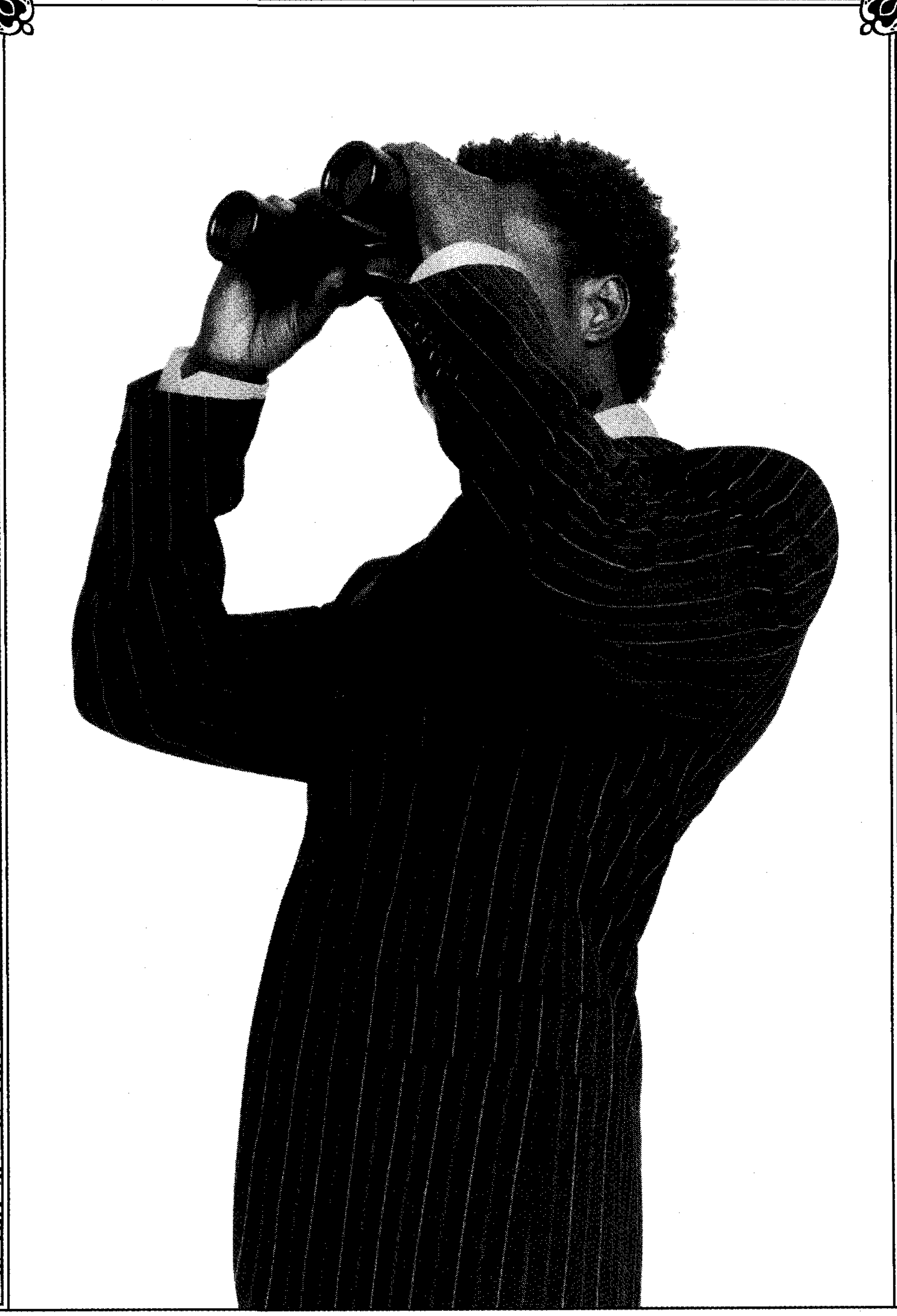

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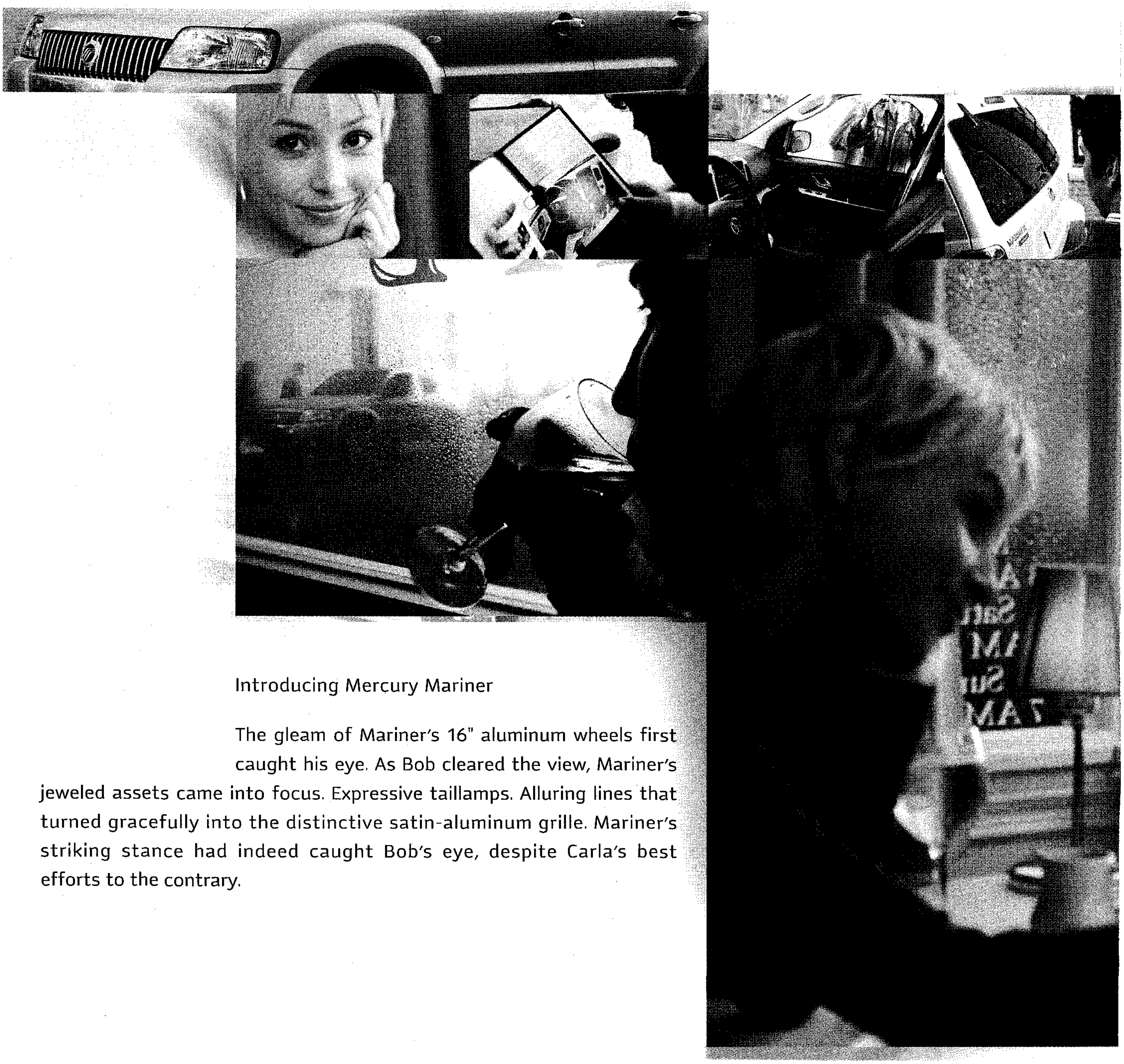

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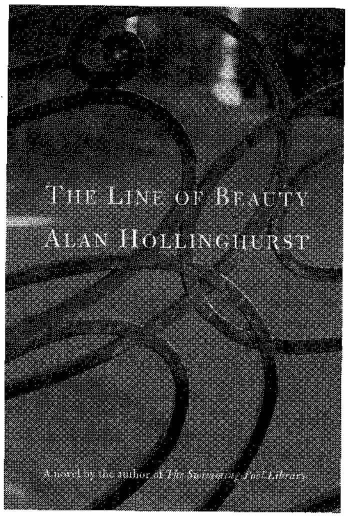

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CONTRIBUTORS

Richard Avedon (Portfolio, p. 60), who died this month, began his collaboration with *The New Yorker* in 1992, when he became the first staff photographer in the magazine's history. During the past twelve years, more than three hundred of his photographs have been published in the magazine. Before joining *The New Yorker*, Avedon was, for forty-five years, a staff photographer at *Harper's Bazaar* and at *Vogue*. His work has been exhibited at, among other places, the Smithsonian Institution, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago, and he had major retrospectives recently at the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. His numerous books include "Observations," with text by Truman Capote; "Nothing Personal," a 1964 collaboration with James Baldwin; "Portraits"; "Avedon: Photographs 1947-1977"; "In the American West," which was published in conjunction with a national museum tour; "An Autobiography"; "Evidence: 1944-1994"; and "Richard Avedon Portraits."

Peter J. Boyer ("The Believer," p. 46) has been a staff writer since 1992.

Anthony Hecht (Poem, p. 48), received a Pulitzer Prize in 1968 for "The Hard Hours," a collection of poems. His last book of new poems, "The Darkness and the Light," was published in 2001. He died last week.

Paul Simms (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 58) is the creator of "NewsRadio." He writes for magazines and television.

Lara Vapnyar (Fiction, p. 92) is the author of "There Are Jews in My House," a collection of short stories, which comes out in paperback in December. She is currently working on a novel.

Saul Steinberg (Cover) is the subject of "Steinberg at *The New Yorker*," by Joel Smith, with an introduction by Ian Frazier. The book, which will be published in February, chronicles the artist's nearly six decades of art for the magazine.

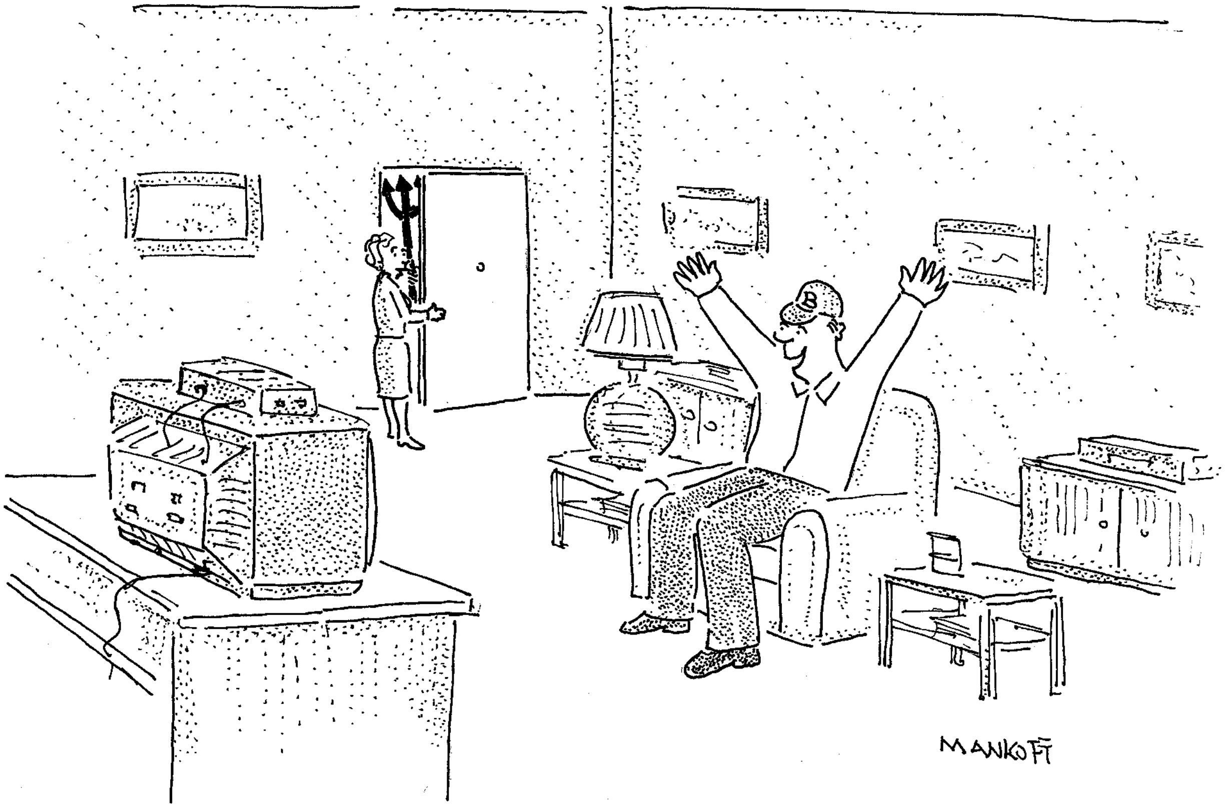
John Updike (Books, p. 100) is a regular contributor of fiction, poetry, and criticism. His books include "The Early Stories: 1953-1975" and "Villages," a novel, which has just come out.

Dorothea Tanning (Poem, p. 102) is the author of a memoir, "Between Lives: An Artist and Her World." This year, she published "A Table of Content," her début collection of poems, and "Chasm," a novel.

Sasha Frere-Jones (Pop Music, p. 108) is the pop-music critic for the magazine.

Anthony Lane (The Current Cinema, p. 110) is the author of "Nobody's Perfect: Writings from *The New Yorker*," which is available in paperback.

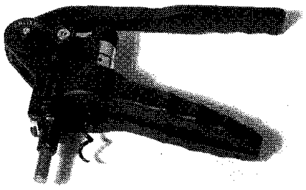
Mark Ulriksen (The Back Page, p. 112) published his first illustrated children's book, "Dog Show," with words by Elizabeth Winthrop, last month. ♦



"Dear, there's someone here to collect your soul."

HERMÈS
PARIS
Hermès by Richard Avedon

"The Rabbit is my 4th lever corkscrew—and the last one I'll have to buy!"
Bob Jula, Pittsburgh, Pa.



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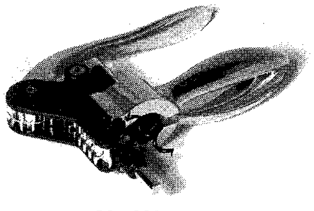

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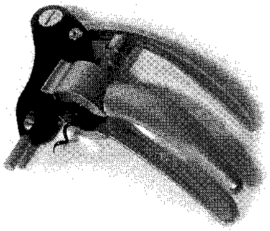

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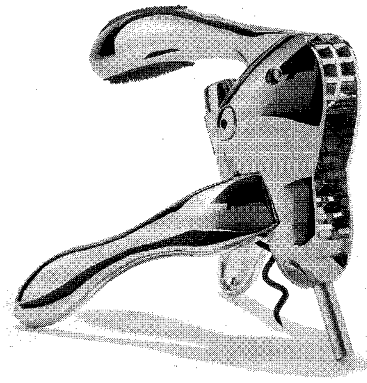

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THE MAIL

THE KURSK SYNDROME

Michael Specter, after showing how Russia is ignoring its rapidly growing AIDS crisis, asks why Brazil, with a comparable population and a lower per-capita income, spends nearly a billion dollars on AIDS while "Russia doesn't spend even a tenth that" ("The Devastation," October 11th). The problem is not unique to AIDS. In my studies of the epidemic of multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis ravaging Russia, I encountered what I came to call "the Kursk syndrome." The Kursk was the nuclear submarine that sank in the Barents Sea in 2000. Many countries offered their help and specialized technology, but Russia delayed accepting foreign assistance until it was too late. When rescuers finally forced their way into the rear hatches, they found the bodies of more than a hundred sailors. In the global village, it is both common and satisfying to see countries aiding other countries coping with famines, epidemics, and natural disasters. But it requires those in need to drop their stubbornness and false pride.
Lee B. Reichman
Executive Director, National Tuberculosis Center, New Jersey Medical School
Newark, N.J.

HOW GREEN WAS MY CITY

David Owen recognizes that, in moving his family from New York City to a Connecticut suburb, he was succumbing to an environmentally unhealthy American addiction to space and travel ("Green Manhattan," October 18th). But, once there, he did little to mitigate the effects of his indulgence. Owen says that his family acquired not one, not two, but three cars—the third having "evolved into a necessity." Whom is he trying to convince? To be sure, the automobile is a fact of American life; that doesn't mean we have no choice in how we live and drive. By choosing wisely, by limiting the size and number of our cars, we can do much to improve the ecological prognosis. If we refuse to make sacrifices—and continue to use convenience as an all-purpose excuse—then we stand to inherit an environmental disaster.
Jeff Doleman
San Francisco, Calif.

Owen points out the advantages of city over sprawl. As it happens, more and more soulless subdivisions are seeking to impersonate urban environments; one in Colorado now touts detached single-family industrial "loft homes." These offer city interiors but none of the ecological benefits. Having recognized the doldrums of suburban life, buyers are seeking the Disneyland version of urban life. The problem is that they are still too timid for the chaos of the real city.
Jonathan Lachance
Brooklyn, N.Y.

ROMANTIC FRIENDSHIPS

David Denby speaks of "the ruthless atmosphere found in Germany in the group that included Fichte, the Schelling brothers, and Hegel" (A Critic at Large, October 11th). He presumably meant the famous Schlegel brothers (Friedrich and August Wilhelm); there was only one Schelling. And the atmosphere around them, at the University of Jena, was characterized more by the genial collaboration that prevailed among the young Romantics, for which Friedrich Schlegel coined the term *Symphilosophie*. Schelling had been Hegel's roommate at school, and they remained friends for many years; Hegel admired Fichte so much that he insisted on being buried next to him; and even when Schelling took A. W. Schlegel's wife away from him it was a relatively friendly parting on all sides.
Theodore Ziolkowski
Professor Emeritus of German
Princeton University
Princeton, N.J.

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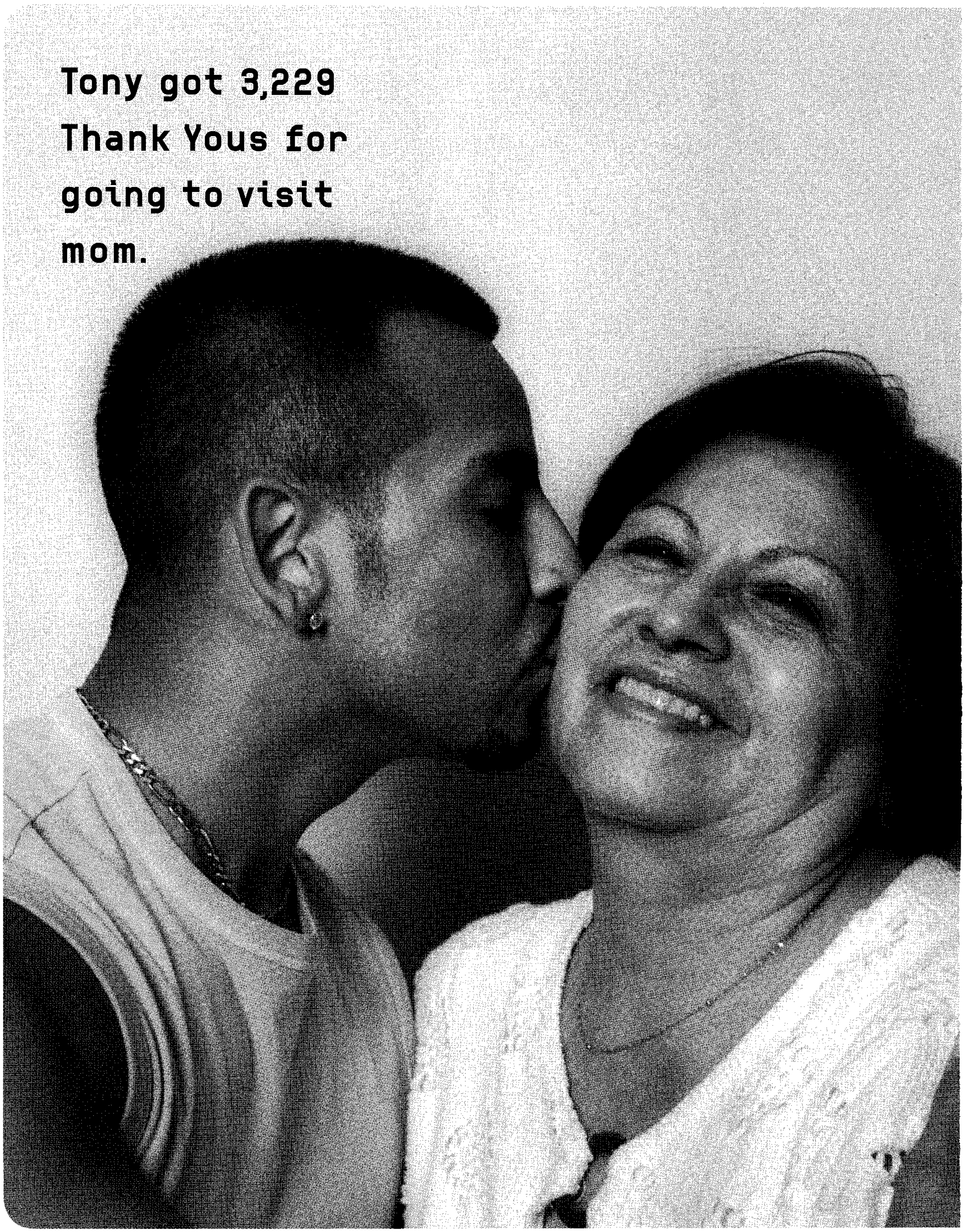

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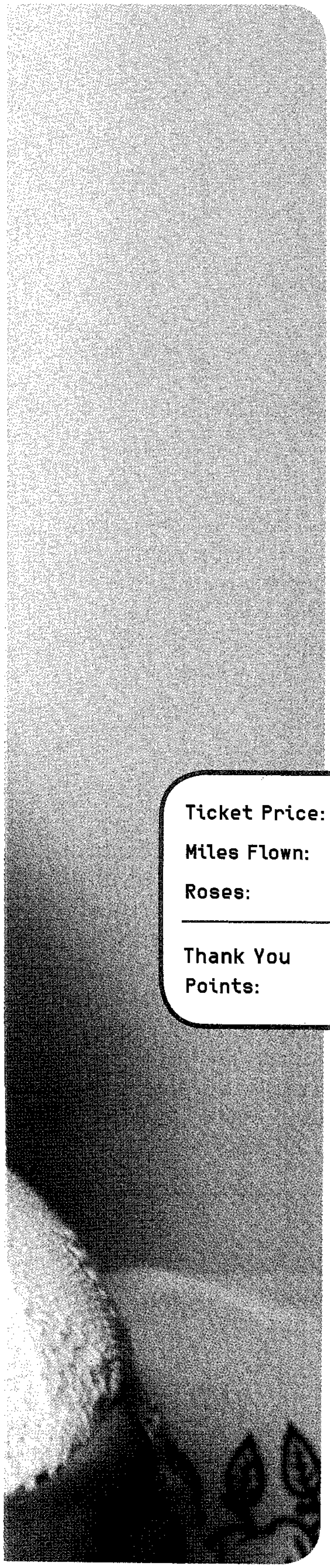

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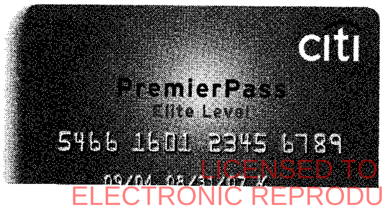
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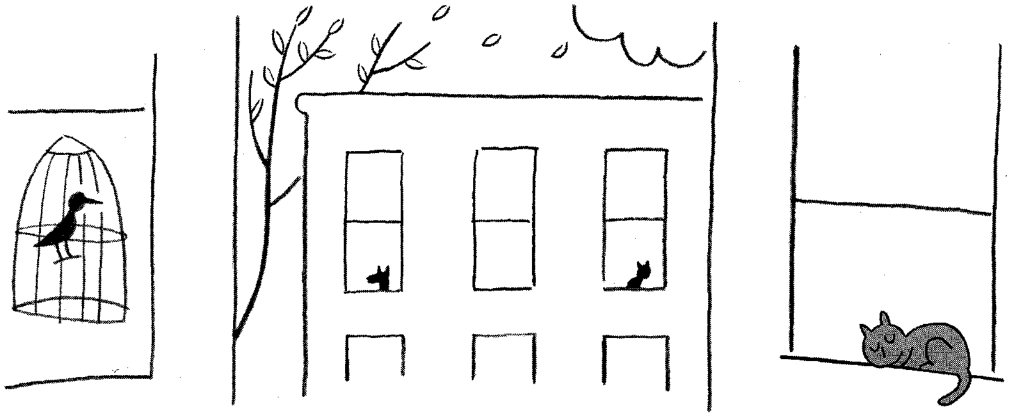

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For expanded events listings, please visit www.newyorker.com/goingson.

THIS WEEK
SOUTHERN LIGHT

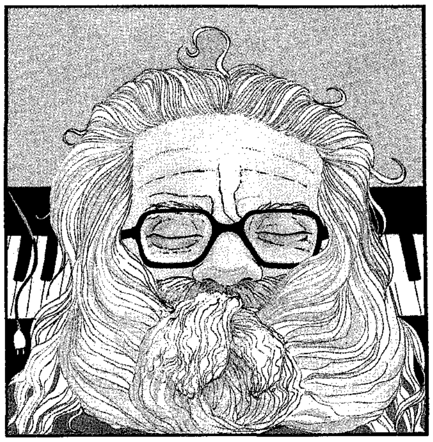
North Americans have come to embrace Brazilian musicians such as Milton Nasciemento and Caetano Veloso, artists who, despite their exotic flavor, fit comfortably into the conventional singer-songwriter mold. Hermeto Pascoal resists such easy categorization. He's a self-taught sixty-eight-year-old composer, arranger, and multi-instrumentalist who can make music using anything from saxophones and keyboards to hubcaps and household appliances. In Pascoal's universe, jazz, samba, classical, and folk fraternize gleefully. This kind of healthy eclecticism is rarely seen in New York City's mainstream jazz community; Lincoln Center brings in the Brazilian national treasure for two shows that also include the percussionist Cyro Baptista. (Oct. 29-30; see Night Life.)

STORY TIME

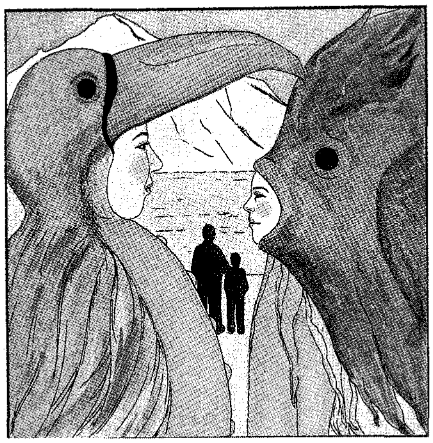
Salman Rushdie wrote "Haroun and the Sea of Stories" while in hiding after the Ayatollah Khomeini issued his death warrant for the author, in 1989. The book, a gift for Rushdie's son, uses the language of children's literature (its characters have names like Princess Batcheat and Butt the Busdriver) to tell a serious story about the importance of creative freedom. Now "Haroun" is an opera, with a libretto by the poet James Fenton and music by the composer Charles Wuorinen; Mark Lamos directs the New York City Opera's world-première production. (New York State Theatre, opens Oct. 31; see Classical Music.)

POLITICAL WORLD

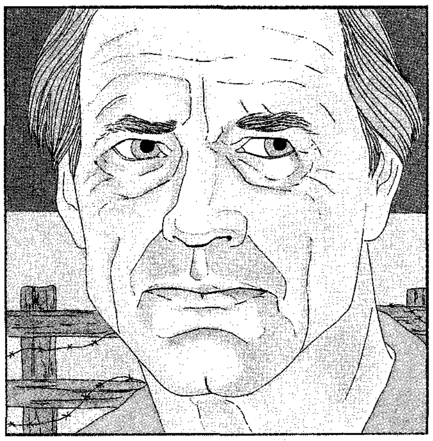
While shooting a film with Wim Wenders in Montana this summer, Sam Shepard wrote "The God of Hell," a dark comedy about a pair of peaceable Midwestern farmers who are terrorized by a malignant and misguided government official. Packed with thinly veiled allusions to recent Republican politics, the play begins previews Oct. 29, just in time for the election. (Actors Studio Drama School Theatre; see Theatre.)



The unclassifiable Brazilian musician Hermeto Pascoal, at Lincoln Center.

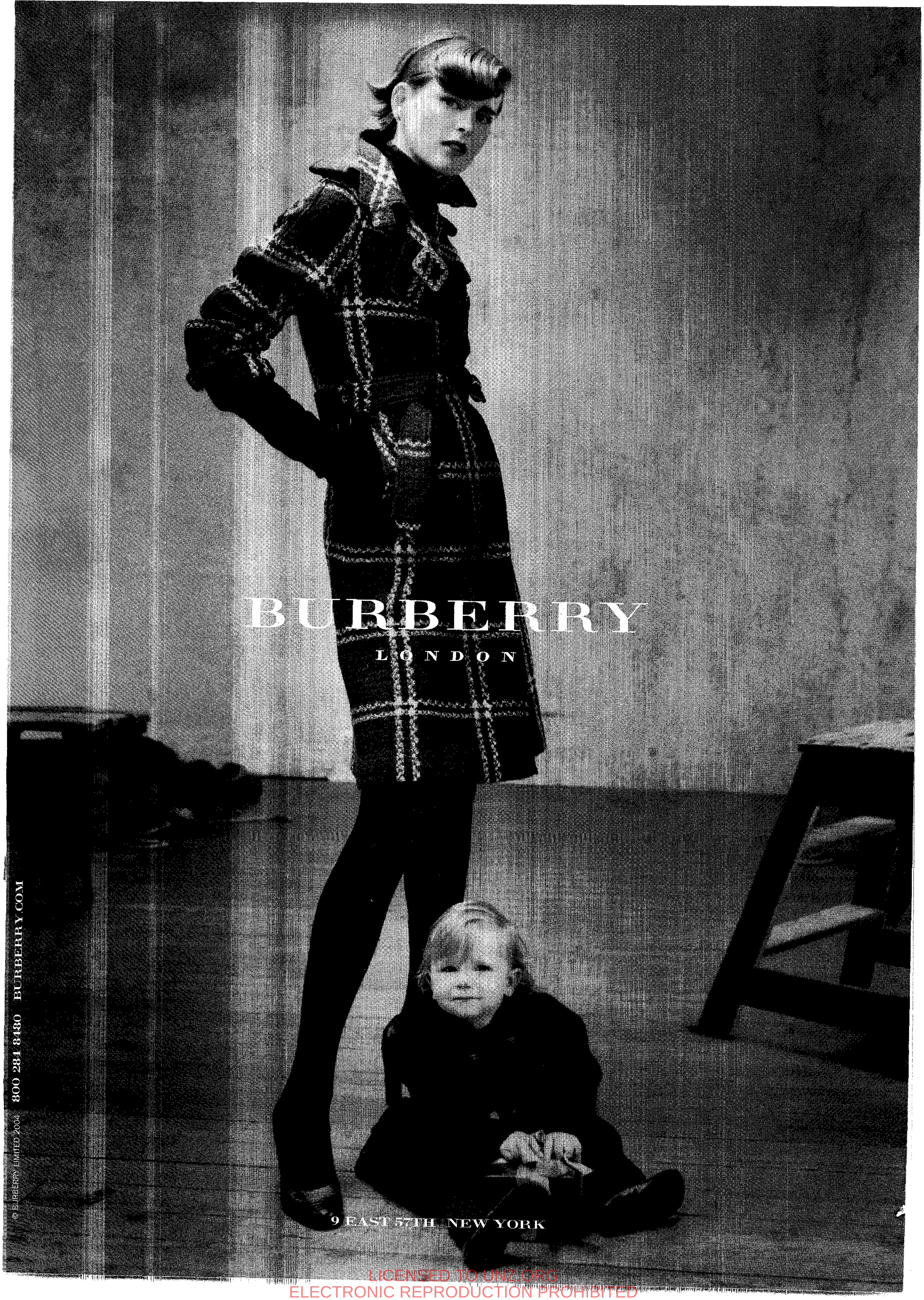


An opera based on Salman Rushdie's "Haroun and the Sea of Stories."



LARA TOMLIN

The new Sam Shepard play, "The God of Hell," premièring at Actors Studio.



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THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

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BELLE ÉPOQUE
A new work by Martha Clarke and Charles L. Mee imagines the life of Toulouse-Lautrec (Mark Povinelli) at the Moulin Rouge and features dance and era-appropriate music—Satie, Debussy, Fauré, and music-hall songs. The mezzo-soprano Joyce Castle sings in the production, whose cast includes Vivienne Benesch, Ruth Maleczech, and others. Directed by Clarke. Previews begin Oct. 28. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

DANNY AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA
Second Stage Theatre presents a revival of John Patrick Shanley's 1984 play about a hard-luck couple, played by Adam Rothenberg and Rosemarie DeWitt, who meet in a dive bar in the Bronx. Directed by Leigh Silverman. In previews. (307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

DIMPHO DI KOPANE
The South African lyric-theatre company—whose name means "combined talents" in Sotho—makes its New York début with four repertory productions: "Yiimimangaliso" ("The Mysteries"), "U-Carmen" ("Carmen"), "Ibali looTsotsi" ("The Beggar's Opera"), and "IKumkanikazi yeKhephu" ("The Snow Queen"). Previews begin Oct. 27. Opens Oct. 29 at 8. (Synod Hall, Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 212-581-1212.)

FIVE BY TENN
Kathleen Chalfant stars in a Manhattan Theatre Club production of five one-act plays by Tennessee Williams. Directed by Michael Kahn. In previews. (131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

THE FOREIGNER
Matthew Broderick and Frances Sternhagen star in the Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of Larry Shue's comedy about an unsociable Brit who goes on vacation in the American South and pretends he doesn't speak English. Directed by Scott Schwartz. In previews. (Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

4:48 PSYCHOSIS
The final work of the British playwright Sarah Kane, who committed suicide in 1998, gets its American première at St. Ann's Warehouse. Directed by James Macdonald. Oct. 26-31. (38 Water St., Brooklyn. 718-254-8779.)

THE GOD OF HELL
A new play by Sam Shepard, directed by Lou Jacob (see This Week). Previews begin Oct. 29. (Actors Studio Drama School Theatre, 151 Bank St. 212-279-4200.)

THE GOOD BODY
Eve Ensler follows up "The Vagina Monologues" with a new play that explores women's body-image issues. Directed by Peter Askin. In previews. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE IMMIGRANT
A new musical, with a book by Mark Harelik, lyrics by Sarah Knapp, and music by Steven M. Alper, tells the true story of a Russian Jewish immigrant who entered this country in 1909—through Galveston, Texas, not Ellis Island. In previews. (Dodger Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200.)

'NIGHT, MOTHER
Brenda Blethyn and Edie Falco star in a revival of Marsha Norman's play about a mother and her suicidal daughter. Directed by Michael Mayer. In previews. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

A PASSAGE TO INDIA
The London company Shared Experience comes to BAM with Martin Sherman's stage adaptation of Forster's classic novel. A co-production with the Nottingham Playhouse. Directed by Nancy Meckler. Nov. 2-6 at 7:30. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 718-636-4100.)

PEOPLE ARE WRONG!
The singer-songwriter John Flansburgh, of They Might Be Giants, makes his stage début in a musical about the misadventures of a Manhattan couple who move to a house in the country. A co-production of the Vineyard Theatre and Target Margin. With music and lyrics by Julia Greenberg and Robin Goldwasser. Directed by David Herskovits. In previews. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303.)

SAKHARAM BINDER
Vijay Tendulkar's controversial play, about a Brahmin bookbinder who takes advantage of abandoned women while pretending to help them, was banned in India thirty years ago. Now it comes to New York, presented by the Play Company, translated by Kumud Mehta and Shanta Gokhale, and directed by Maria Mileaf ("Private Jokes, Public Places"). In previews. Opens Oct. 30 at 7. (59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

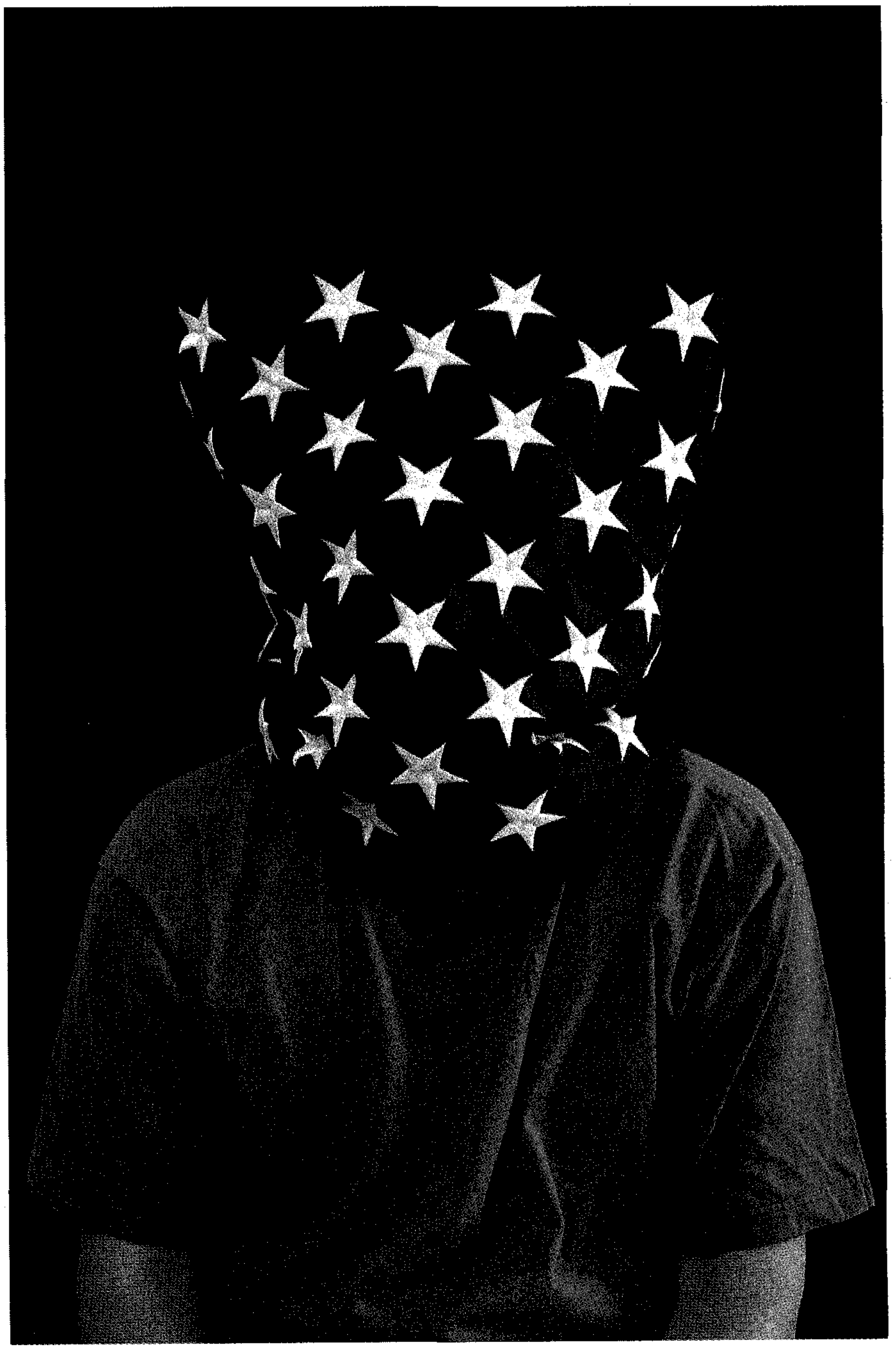
TINY NINJA THEATRE PRESENTS HAMLET
A miniature plastic action figure is the Danish prince in this multimedia production of the tragedy, in which all the roles are played by figurines. Size-enhancing projection devices are used to magnify the dramatic effect. Directed by Dov Weinstein. Previews begin Oct. 28. (P.S. 122, First Ave. at 9th St. 212-477-5288.)

TWELVE ANGRY MEN
Philip Bosco, Larry Bryggman, Boyd Gaines, and ten others appear in the Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of Reginald Rose's fifties jury drama. Directed by Scott Ellis. Two previews on Oct. 27. Opens Oct. 28 at 7. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

OPENED RECENTLY

BROOKLYN: THE MUSICAL
A young Parisienne named Brooklyn seeks fame and her long-lost father, in a new musical set in the heroine's namesake borough. Book, music, and lyrics by Mark Schoenfeld and Barri McPherson. Directed by Jeff Calhoun. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

DIRTY TRICKS
In John Jeter's fine play about Martha Mitchell—the flamboyant Arkansan wife of John Mitchell, Nixon's attorney general during the Watergate scandal—Judith Ivey brings the "mouth of the South" vividly to life and shows that Mitchell's outbursts to the press at that time weren't fuelled



"Star Gazing," by Hans Haacke, in "Election," at American Fine Arts (see Art).

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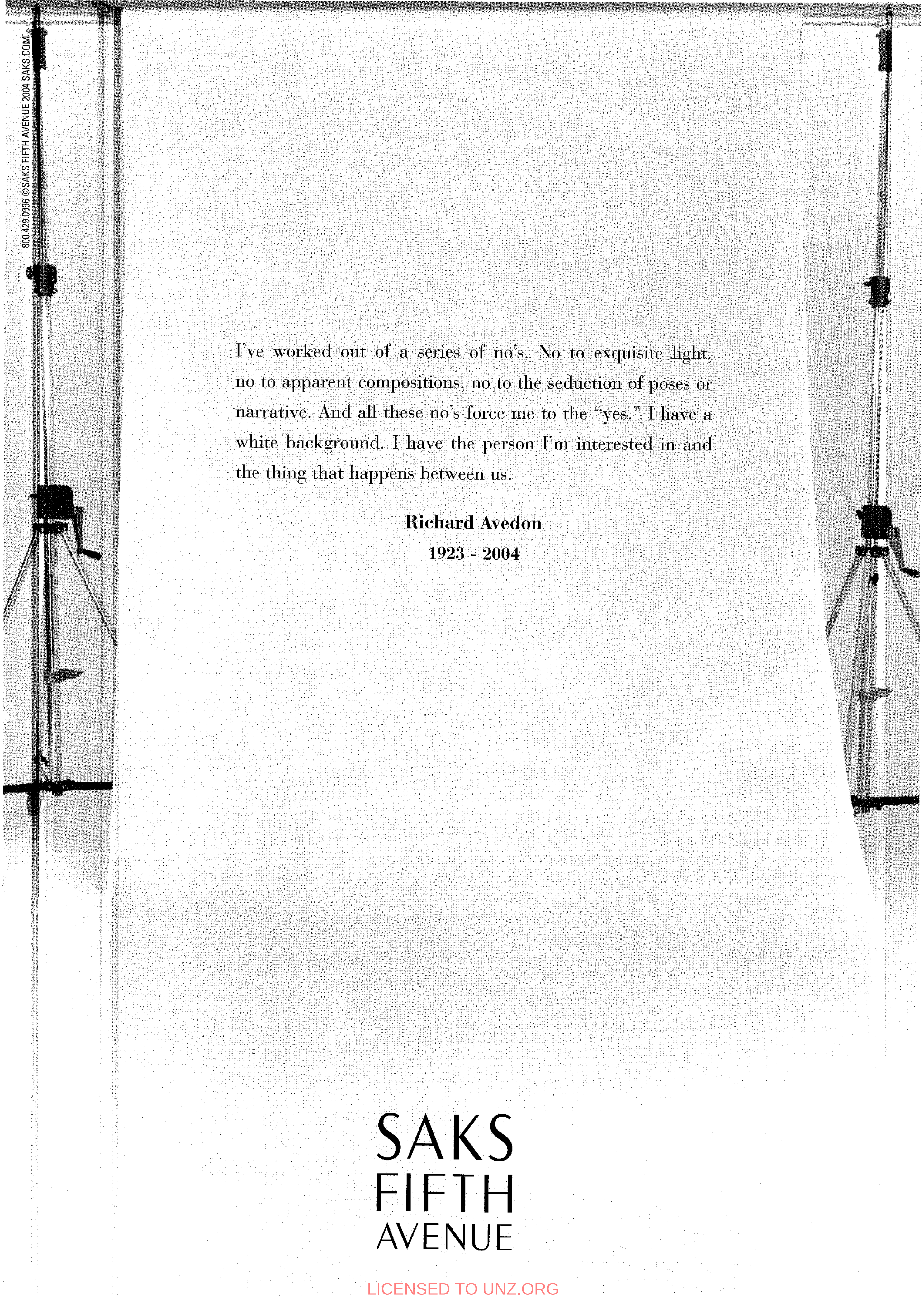

I've worked out of a series of no's. No to exquisite light, no to apparent compositions, no to the seduction of poses or narrative. And all these no's force me to the "yes." I have a white background. I have the person I'm interested in and the thing that happens between us.

Richard Avedon

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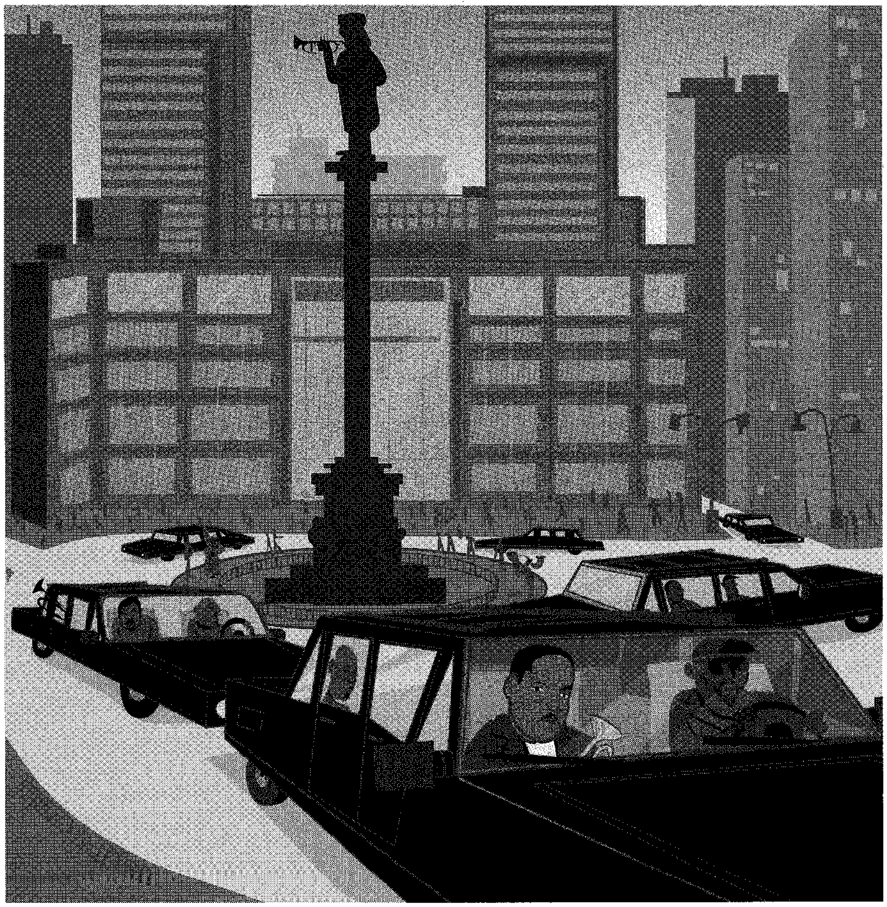
just by her taste for whiskey. As Kissinger said, "Even paranoids can have enemies." Directed by Margaret Whitton, with an effective set by Neil Patel that occasionally projects vintage news stills onto the molded wall panels of Mitchell's boudoir. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

EVE-OLUTION
A play by Hilary Illick and Jennifer Krier (based on their experiences) interweaves the stories of two women who are struggling to retain their sense of self while raising a family. Alison (Carolyn McCormick), a sexy but brittle anthropology professor, has a type-A personality. The mellower Liza (Sabrina Le Beauf—who radiates a serene, sensual presence) is a writer who jots down ideas in crayon while nursing her twins. But even Liza loses it sometimes, overwhelmed by being, as Alison puts it, "engulfed by other people's needs." This show knows its audience; it has no surprises, but plenty of heart. Directed by Carolyn Cantor. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 212-239-6200.)



MAXIMILIAN BODE

ROSE IS A ROSE *Jazz at Lincoln Center's new Columbus Circle home includes three separate performance spaces—the Rose Theatre, which feels intimate but can hold more than a thousand patrons; the midsized Allen Room, overlooking Central Park; and Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, a sleek little space that is open nightly.*

THE GOSPEL AT COLONUS
Charles S. Dutton joins the Blind Boys of Alabama, the Legendary Soul Stirrers, and local choral groups in a revival of the Obie-winning 1983 musical, created by Lee Breuer and Bob Telson, which sets Sophocles' Oedipus drama in a Pentecostal gospel service. (Apollo, 253 W. 125th St. 212-531-5305. Through Nov. 7.)

JEWTOPIA
A comedy by Bryan Fogel and Sam Wolfson, about a Gentile whose Jewish best friend teaches him how to get a Jewish wife. Directed by John Tillinger. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200.)

LAUGH WHORE
Mario Cantone's one-man variety show includes music by Jerry Dixon, with lyrics by Cantone, Dixon, and Harold Lubin. Directed by Joe Mantello, with musical direction by Tom Kitt. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

MOVIN' OUT
Twyla Tharp's virtuosissimo dance-drama (to songs by Billy Joel), about small-town teen-agers during the Vietnam War era, has acquired a new head of steam with the addition of Nancy Lemenager and Desmond Richardson to the cast, in the roles of the lovers Brenda and Tony. Neither is a great actor, and neither looks like a teen-ager, but teen-agers can't dance on this level. Richardson, in particular, should get an award. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-239-6200.)

NINE PARTS OF DESIRE
A searing work written and performed by the Iraqi-American playwright Heather Raffo, who uses a big black shawl to transform herself into a series of Iraqi women and girls whose lives she researched over the past eleven years. Directed by Joanna Settle. (Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. 212-239-6200.)

THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD
Ireland's Abbey Theatre brings J. M. Synge's drama about a cold-blooded raconteur to New York in a production directed by Ben Barnes—part of the Abbey's centenary tour. (Skirball Center for the Performing Arts, 566 LaGuardia Pl. 212-992-8484. Through Oct. 31.)

RECKLESS
In Craig Lucas's play, revived by the Manhattan Theatre Club and Second Stage at the Biltmore, under the slick direction of Mark Brokaw, the central metaphor is snow: an emblem, if we needed another, of America's dreams of purity and abundance, which the quirky, deeply detached heroine of the play, Rachel (Mary-Louise Parker), invokes as the curtain rises. It is Christmas Eve, and as she stares out at the village beyond her window, kvelling about the perfection of the winter scene, her mournful husband (Thomas Sadoski) bursts into tears and admits that he has taken out a hit on her life. Both she and the play go in search of a reason to exist. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/25/04.) (261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

SIN (A CARDINAL DEPOSED)
The role that Cardinal Bernard F. Law played in the sexual-abuse scandals of the Boston archdiocese is examined in a play by Michael Murphy that weaves together the Cardinal's deposition testimony and accounts from victims and their families. Directed by Carl Forsman. (Clurman, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

SPATTER PATTERN
In a play by Neal Bell, the ambiguously evil Tate (Darren Pettie), a New York professor suspected of killing one of his students, meets his neighbor Dunn (Peter Frechette), a writer who's been blocked since his partner died. The two make a morose and, at times, implausible pair, as each examines the role he may have played in one of the deaths. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. Through Oct. 31.)

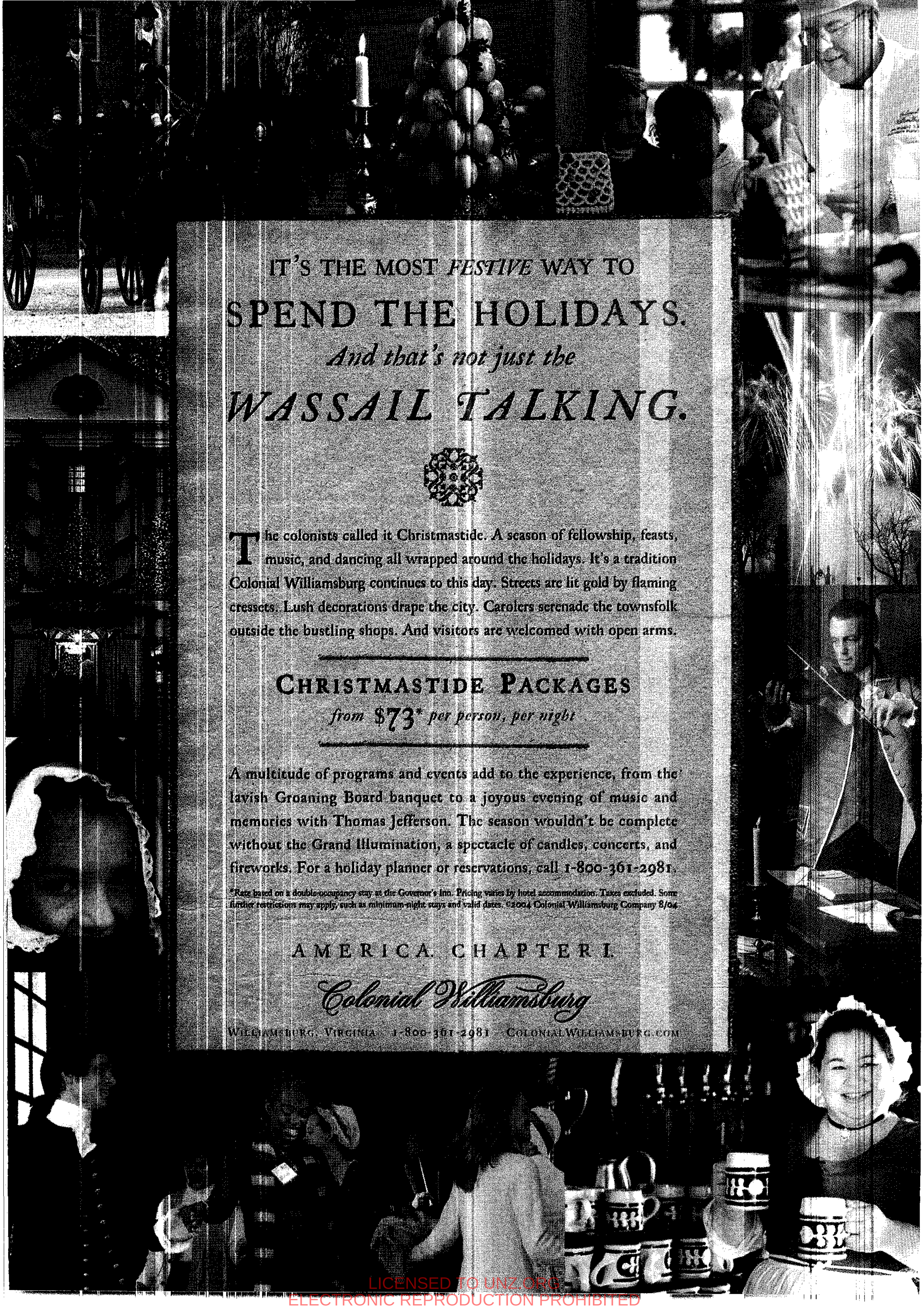
STRING OF PEARLS
The premise of Michele Lowe's new play at Primary Stages—that a woman could lose a pearl necklace and find it again thirty years later—seems clichéd, but the charm and nuance of the writing make the fable believable and fresh. Eric Simonson directs. (59E59 Theatre, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

TRIBECA THEATRE FESTIVAL
The new downtown festival continues. Most events occur at Tribeca Cinemas, at 54 Varick Street, but "The Downtown Plays," an evening of new work by Wendy Wasserstein, Neil LaBute, Jon Robin Baitz, Douglas Carter Beane, and five other playwrights, directed by John Rando ("Urinetown"), takes place at the Michael Schimmel Center for the Arts at Pace University. (For complete festival information, visit www.tribecatheaterfestival.com. 212-941-2450. Through Oct. 31.)

TRYING
In a touching, traditional drama by Joanna McClelland Glass, a determined young Canadian secretary (Kati Brazda) with a passion for Wallace Stevens tries to straighten out the paperwork of a crotchety lawmaker, Francis Biddle (Fritz Weaver). Both characters are prickly: Biddle, an F.D.R.-era attorney general and a judge at the Nuremberg trials, has let old age and self-pity erode his democratic ideals; Sarah, the secretary, is overly sensitive and unbending. Their relationship develops through conversation that has the ring of actual speech between clever, self-protective people. Directed by Sandy Shinner. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 212-239-6200.)

DANCE

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE
The company's second week at City Center includes several performances each of the season's standouts: Fokine's "Le Spectre de la Rose"; Trey McIntyre's "Pretty Good Year," set to a Dvořák piano trio; and Christopher Wheeldon's "VIII," about Henry VIII, Catherine of Aragon, and Anne Boleyn, set to Benjamin Britten's "Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge, Op. 10." Other highlights include Balanchine's neoclassical "Theme and Variations," the joyous "Grand Pas Classique," Jirí Kylián's "Sinfonietta," and, in a more contemporary mode, the début of the company member Danny Tidwell, on Oct. 26, in Kirk Peterson's "Amazed in Burning Dreams," set to Philip Glass's film score for "Mishima." ♦ Oct. 26 at 7:30: "Pretty Good Year," "Le Spectre de la Rose," "Swan Lake Act II Pas de Deux," "Le Corsaire Pas de Deux," and "Amazed in Burning Dreams." ♦ Oct. 27 at 7:30: "Pretty Good Year," "Le Spectre de la Rose," "Grand Pas Classique," "Le Corsaire Pas de Deux," and "Theme and Variations." ♦ Oct. 28 at 7:30: "Petite Mort," "Sechs Tänze," "VIII," and "Theme and Variations." ♦ Oct. 29 at 8: "Petite Mort," "Sechs Tänze," "Workwithinwork," and "Amazed in Burning Dreams." ♦ Oct. 30 at 2: "Theme and Variations," "Le Spectre de la Rose," "Swan Lake Act III Pas de Deux," "Le Corsaire Pas de Deux," and "Sinfonietta." ♦ Oct. 30 at 8:

IT'S THE MOST *FESTIVE* WAY TO
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*Rate based on a double-occupancy stay at the Governor's Inn. Pricing varies by hotel accommodation. Taxes excluded. Some further restrictions may apply, such as minimum-night stays and valid dates. ©2004 Colonial Williamsburg Company 8/04

AMERICA. CHAPTER I.

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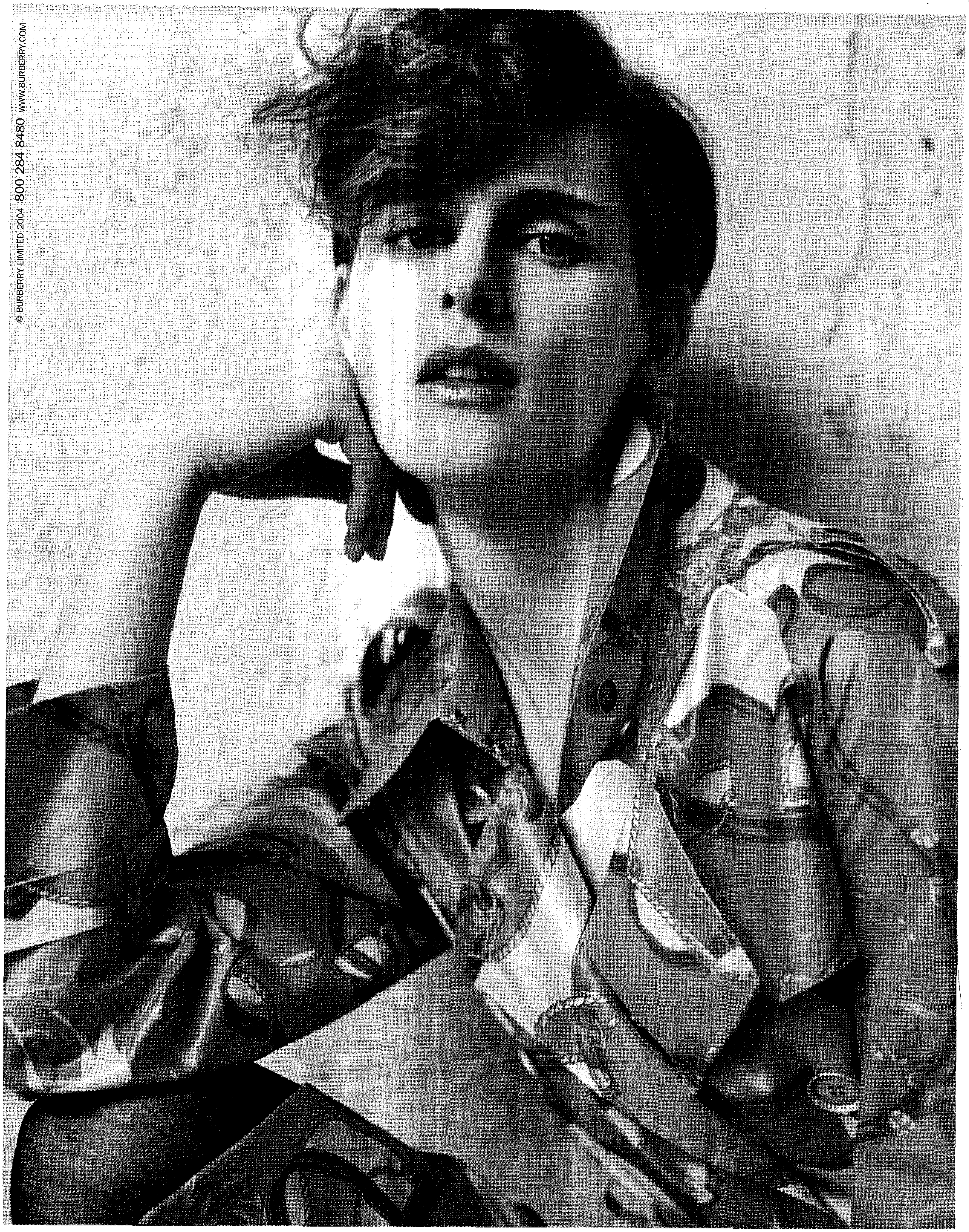

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"Pretty Good Year," "VIII," and "Sinfonietta." ♦ Oct. 31 at 2: "Theme and Variations," "Le Spectre de la Rose," "Grand Pas Classique," "Angelina Ballerina" (a pièce d'occasion), and "Sinfonietta." ♦ Oct. 31 at 7:30: "Petite Mort," "Sechs Tänze," "VIII," and "Amazed in Burning Dreams." ♦ Nov. 2 at 7:30: "Pretty Good Year," "Workwithinwork," and "Sinfonietta." (131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. Through Nov. 7.)

"FOREVER TANGO"
Luis Bravo's evening of Argentine dance features fourteen dancers and an eleven-piece orchestra. The show has returned to the Shubert following a successful run this summer. (225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. Oct. 26, Oct. 28-29, and Nov. 2 at 8; Oct. 27 and Oct. 30 at 2 and 8; and Oct. 31 at 3. Through Nov. 28.)

"MANDANCE PROJECT"
A six-member group—five men and one woman, led by Damian Woetzel—performs eleven new dances by Eliot Feld, in three rotating programs. The aesthetic is spare, with bare stages and shirtless dancers. Between them, Damian Woetzel, Sean Suozzi, and Wu-Kang Chen dance four of Feld's latest solos. Suozzi's intensity animates the new "Proverb," which he performs on a darkened stage, with four bright lights strapped to his palms. Nearly nude, he strikes sinuous poses, turning his hands toward his body, illuminating a leg, a cheek, a hip bone. The effect is part Caravaggio, part Narcissus. (175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. Oct. 26-30 and Nov. 2 at 8 and Oct. 31 at 3. Through Nov. 7.)

"COME HOME CHARLEY PATTON"
For the final and most autobiographical section of Ralph Lemon's "Geography Trilogy," which has its première this week, Lemon travelled to the Deep South, retracing his family history. Whether that trip was a homecoming or yet another journey through a foreign land is only one of many subjects under investigation—Delta blues legends, the civil-rights movement—in an oblique mix of fluent dance, documentary footage, and digital animation. (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100. Oct. 26 and Oct. 28-30 at 7:30.)

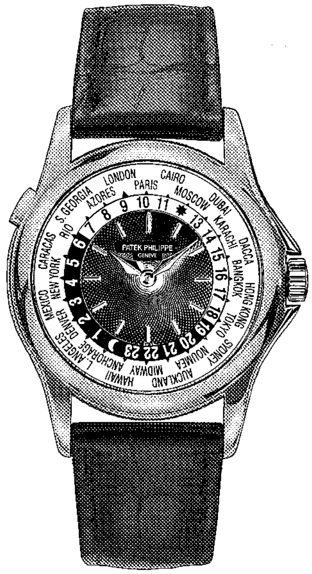
BALÉ FOLCLÓRICO DA BAHIA
Brazil's richest mix of African, European, and indigenous influences is concentrated in the state of Bahia. This thirty-member troupe of dancers and musicians shows off its Bahian heritage in performances that bring together African gods and fantastical Amazonian creatures, New World inventions like capoeira and stick-and-sword harvest dances, and such recent hybrids as samba reggae. Sporting more plumage than Vegas showgirls, the dancers seem to value kaleidoscopic spectacle over authenticity, but their non-stop exuberance and catchy rhythms rarely fail to get audiences moving in their seats. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. Oct. 28-29 at 8.)

"LA MÁQUINA DEL TIEMPO"
Merián Soto Dance and Performance makes heady use of Latin ballroom forms. The conceit of Soto's new work is that dance functions as a time machine—the "Máquina del Tiempo" of the title—and that muscle memory connects different eras. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. Oct. 27-30 at 7:30.)

"NEEL: THE ETERNAL BLUE"
The cerulean Hindu gods are the inspiration for this classical Indian dance piece by the Trinayan Collective, which explores temple traditions from the eastern-Indian province of Orissa. As five women use posture and gesture to illustrate tales of the gods, the *sutradharam*, or narrator, Rajika Puri, interprets their movements with chants, poetry, and commentary. Directed by Bani Ray. (Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St. 212-334-7479. Oct. 28-30 at 8.)

BATTERY DANCE COMPANY
Four members of Jonathan Hollander's downtown company—Sean Scantlebury, Lydia Tetzlaff, John Byrne, and Nilaya Sabnis—present new solos and a quartet set to Poulenc's 1953 Sonata for Two Pianos. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, Borough of Manhattan Community College, 199 Chambers St. 212-220-1460. Oct. 27-28 at 1 and 8.)

"THE POSSESSED: HASIDISM IN THE ARTS"
The choreographer Pearl Lang has been making dances for thirty years. At the 92nd Street Y's annual "Breaking Ground" interview, Lang discusses



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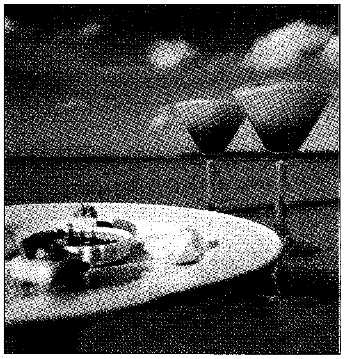

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the influence of Jewish mysticism on her work with the critic Deborah Jowitt, following a screening of a film of her 1975 dance-theatre piece, "The Possessed," based on the Yiddish folktale. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Oct. 31 at 7:30.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE
Oct. 28-29 at 8: **Balé Folclórico da Bahia** (see Dance). (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St.) Oct. 30 at 2: **Purna Das Baul** is one of India's most famous folksingers—his picture is on the cover of Bob Dylan's 1967 album "John Wesley Harding." (Queens Theatre in the Park, Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Queens.) (For more information about both shows, call 212-545-7536.)

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER
"Let Freedom Swing: A Celebration of Human Rights and Social Justice," features **Glenn Close, Keith David, Calvin O. Butts III,** and others reading works by the likes of Vaclav Havel, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Eleanor Roosevelt, and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra performing new compositions by Darius Brubeck, Zim Ngqawana, Jimmy Heath, and others. (Rose Theatre, Oct. 28-30 at 8.) "Brasil Livre!" brings together the multi-instrumentalist **Hermeto Pascoal,** who will perform solo and with his band, and **Cyro Baptista's Beat the Donkey Special Edition** (see This Week). (Allen Room, Oct. 29-30 at 7:30.) (Broadway at 60th St. 212-721-6500.)

"SCHOOLHOUSE ROXX!"
On the last weekend of each month, P.S. 122 puts rock and roll and performance art on the curriculum. Oct. 29: **Jarboe,** a Georgia native who sang with New York's legendary nihilists the Swans for more than a decade, is not an easy musician to categorize. She pairs the visual flair of performance art with a fiercely eclectic arsenal of styles, and she never shies away from the aggressive and the extreme. Her current tour finds her flanked by only a guitarist and a violinist. Oct. 30: The trashy spectacle of **Mz. Pakman** headlines an evening that includes a bug-eating woman and burlesque dancing rats. Oct. 31: The gothic cabaret of **Barbez,** whose lead singer is an intense Russian dancer named Ksenia Vidyaykina. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 212-477-5288. The shows are at 9.)

SWITCHFOOT
This tight-knit group from San Diego has a passion for surfing (their name is slang for changing the orientation of one's feet on the board) that's matched only by their idealism (they come from the realm of contemporary Christian music). They play glossy alternative pop with an apparently universal appeal—their latest album, "The Beautiful Letdown," is a bona-fide hit. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 212-307-7171. Oct. 29 at 7:30.)

GREEN DAY
It's hard to believe that a decade has passed since Green Day's breakout album, "Dookie," crowned the Bay Area band the kings of pop punk. The passage of time does wonders, and despite (or perhaps because of) a body of work based on boredom, failed romanticism, and masturbation the trio qualify as elder statesmen of their genre. As such, the boys have developed a sense of semi-responsibility and are currently promoting their new, somewhat political concept album, "American Idiot." (Continental Airlines Arena, the Meadowlands. 212-307-7171. Oct. 30 at 7:30.)

TIGER LILLIES
The decadent and theatrical London trio bring a new Halloween-appropriate show to Symphony Space. The leader, Martyn Jacques, has an eerie falsetto and plays sultry accordion lines, and the band is rounded out by an upright bass and a toy drum set. Jacques's Brechtian songs are populated with pimps and murderers, and they manage to be macabre and oddly empathetic. (Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400. Oct. 31 at 7.)

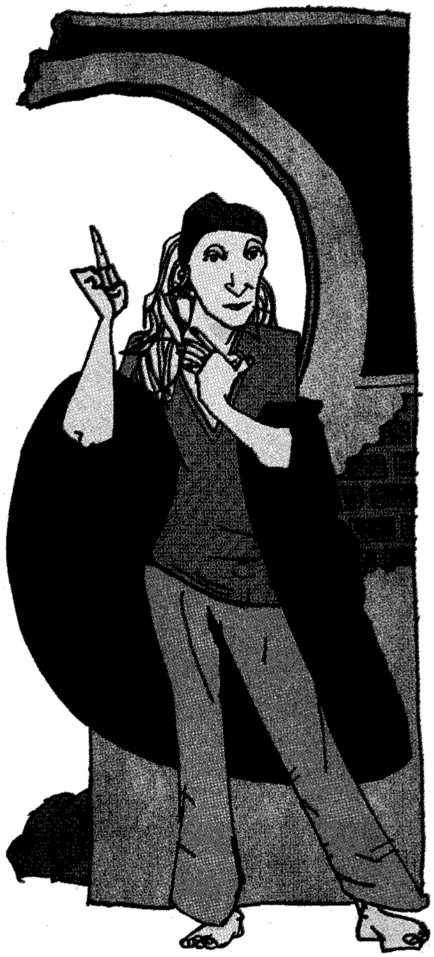
MEDESKI, MARTIN & WOOD
The funky, crossover new-jazz trio has a new album, "End of the World Party (Just in Case)," that was produced by John King, one half of the legendary production team the Dust Brothers. (Hammerstein Ballroom. Oct. 31 at 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BAM CAFÉ
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4139)—Oct. 29: **Femm Nameless,** a seven-piece all-female Afrobeat band.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Oct. 29: The Weimaresque cabaret of Boston's **Dresden Dolls.**



Heather Raffo, in "Nine Parts of Desire."

JASHAR AWAN

CRASH MANSION
199 Bowery, at Spring St. (212-982-7821)—Oct. 29: The banjo player **Curtis Eller,** the singer-songwriter **Pete Galub,** the rock band **Skyrocket,** and other New York City-based musicians celebrate their contributions to the release of the DVD "What Goes On!," a musical variety show with a slow-paced mid-twentieth-century aesthetic.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—Oct. 27-28: The Italian-and-Japanese avant-pop of **Blonde Redhead.** Oct. 29: "The Reunion of a Generation" brings together **Glenn Tilbrook,** formerly of Squeeze, the **Smithereens, Marshall Crenshaw,** and **Graham Parker**—all eighties veterans who emphasized New Wave and power pop over fashion. Fittingly, the show will be hosted by Dave Herman, Meg Griffin, Vin Scelsa, Jim Monahan, Ken Dashow, and other d.j.s from the old radio station WNEW. Oct. 30: **Gogol Bordello.** Eugene Hutz has been a busy man. He's the charismatic front man of this local group with Eastern European roots whose grandly anarchic concerts of Slavic-tinged Gypsy punk have attracted a devoted following. He's also held court on a regular basis around town as a d.j., spinning an eclectic mix of trans-global music that has attracted an equally rabid bunch of fans. His latest project is J.U.F. (short for "Jewish-Ukrainian Freundschaft"), a collaboration with Tamir Muskat, the drummer for the noirish instrumental trio Big Lazy. The two enlisted some like-minded friends and combed a wide variety of record bins for the new album "Gogol Bordello vs. Tamir Muskat." The rousing result sounds like something along the lines of a joint gig between a Gypsy wedding band, the Sex Pistols, the Jamaican dub impresario King Tubby, and Kraftwerk.

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—Oct. 26-27: **Tinariwen** are a group of Tuareg tribesmen who once fought in Mali's civil war. They've since traded their rifles for guitars, and they practice a bluesy rock with revolutionary fervor.

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—Oct. 28: **Mike Watt & the Secondmen.** Watt, one of the most beloved figures in the American underground since his days with the Minutemen, recently had a brush with death because of an infected perineum. That ordeal, along with with Dante's Divine Comedy, inspired his new album, "The Secondman's Middle Stand."

S.O.B.'S
204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (212-243-4940)—Oct. 31: The English neo-soul duo **Floetry.**

SPIRIT
530 W. 27th St. (212-268-9477)—Oct. 27: **Gwar** returns to the stage, in a mess of performance art, thrash metal, and perverse parody. The Richmond, Virginia, collective of irreverent reprobates (their name is an acronym for "God, What an Awful Racket") dress in wild costumes (they are supposed to be aliens) and pepper their shows with imaginative (if violent) special effects that often involve streams of mock blood and other fluids.

WEBSTER HALL
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—Oct. 29: The **Walkmen.** Thanks to the plaintive growl of the lead vocalist, Hamilton Leithauser, the velveteen lushness of the organist, Walter Martin, and a stylishly dishevelled production aesthetic, this local ensemble is one of the leading groups on the surging New York City rock scene. Oct. 30: **Steve Earle,** the Michael Moore of alternative country.

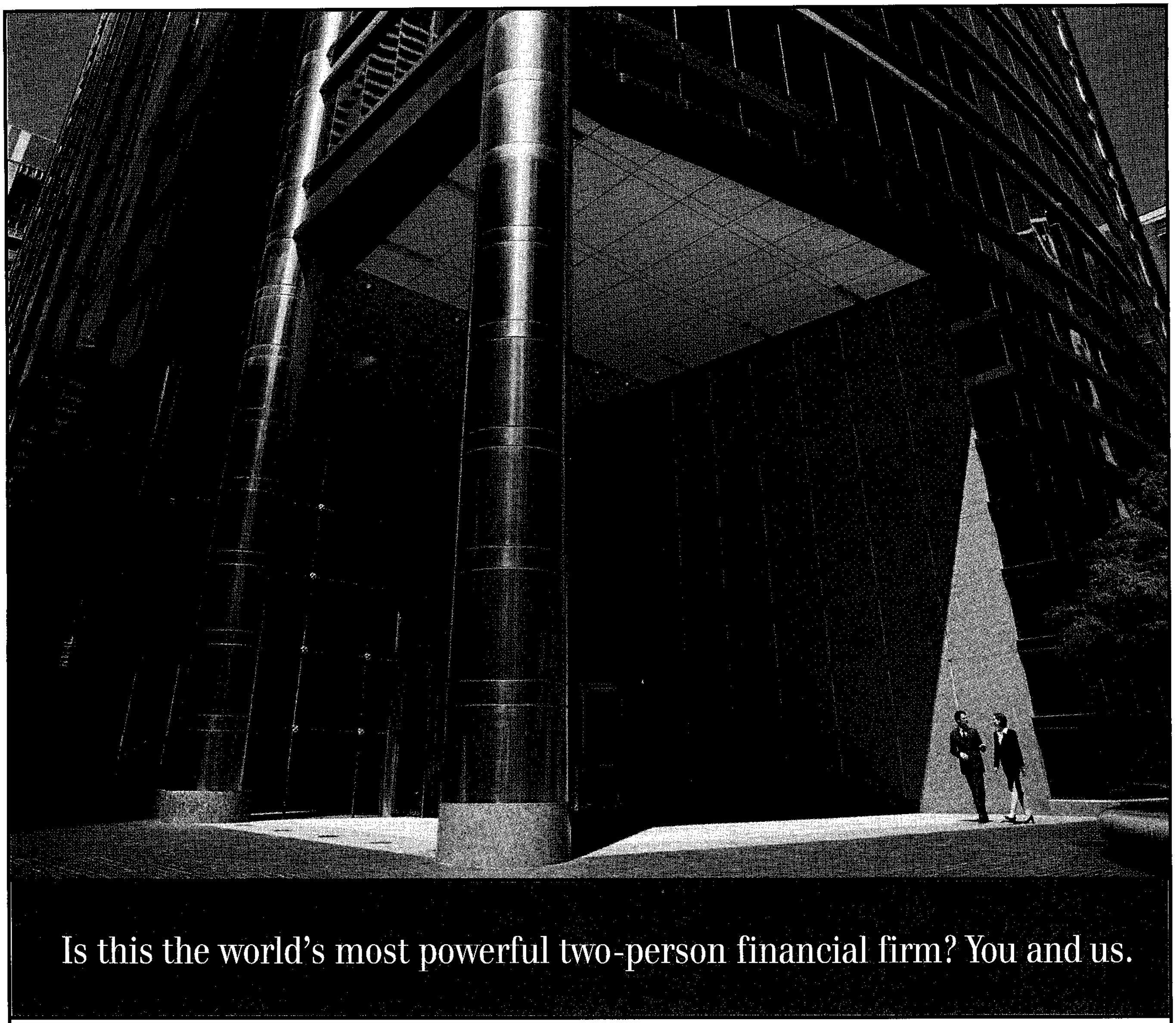
JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL
59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800)—Through Nov. 13: **Paula West.** With each East Coast visit, this San Francisco-based singer reminds us how peaceably jazz and cabaret can coexist when fused by a sensitive and technically assured artist. West can drive a band hard, or gently reveal the emotional heart of a ballad. The Oak Room is home to the pianist **Barbara Carroll** on Sunday afternoons and evenings.

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Oct. 27-30: The **Andy Summers** trio. The former guitarist for the Police has been indulging his jazz jones over the past few years, releasing fusionesque albums that celebrate the work of Charles Mingus and Thelonious Monk. His latest album, "Earth + Sky," concentrates on his own tunes.

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound murals, and, through Dec. 31, **Bobby Short.**

DIZZY'S CLUB COCA-COLA
Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—Through Oct. 31: Dizzy Gillespie's passion for Latin music is the focus of a tribute led by **Paquito D'Rivera,** a whirlwind virtuoso of the saxophone and clarinet and a favored bandmate of the majestic trumpeter.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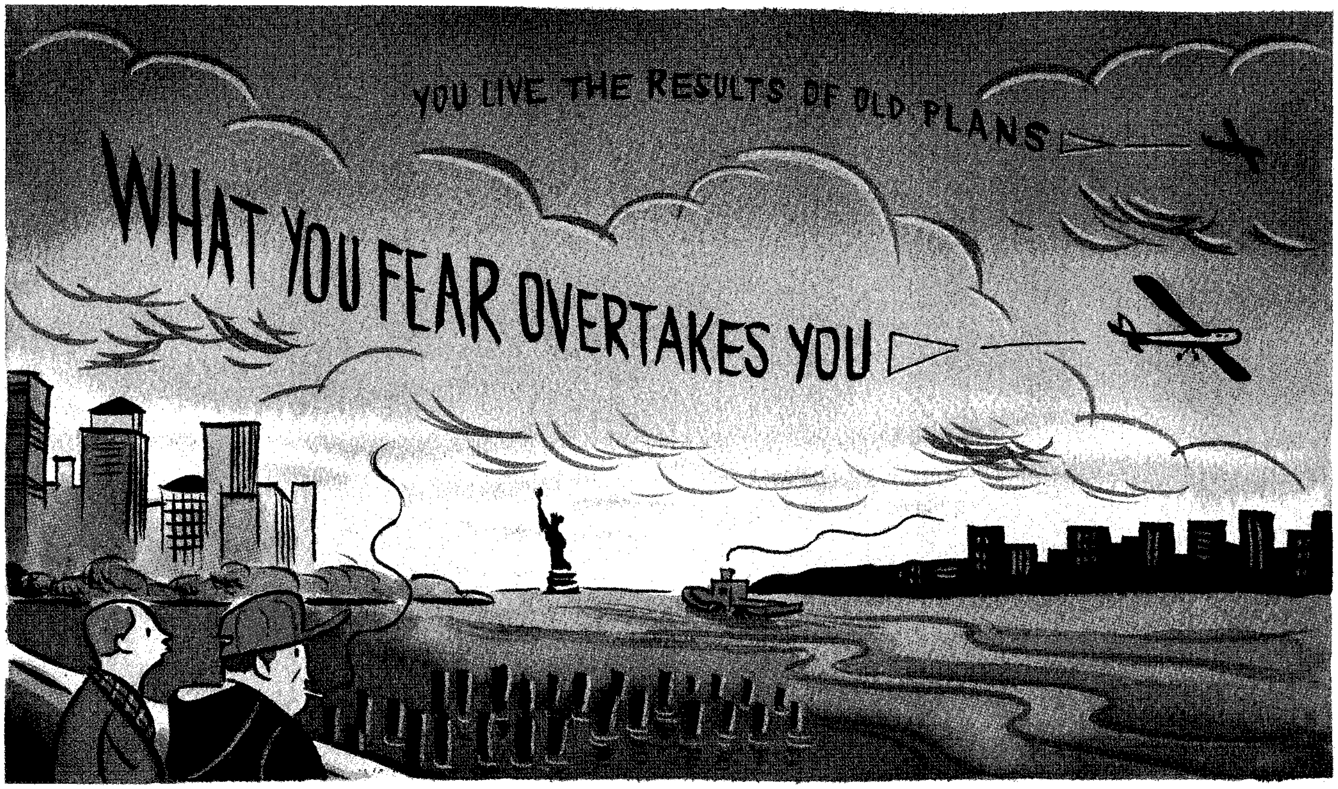
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MARCELLUS HALL

FEINSTEIN'S AT THE REGENCY
540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (212-339-4095)—The M.O.R. diva **Melissa Manchester** recently released her first album of new material in ten years, "When I Look Down That Road." She makes a rare club stop here through Nov. 5.

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—Oct. 26-27: The pianist and composer **Frank Kimbrough,** a staunch foot soldier of the Jazz Composers Collective, stops by with his trio, featuring the bassist **Ben Allison** and the drummer **Matt Wilson,** whose interplay makes Kimbrough's new album, "Lullabluebye," a joy.

SWEET RHYTHM
88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (212-255-3626)—Oct. 29-30: The **Bruce Barth** trio. Barth, who first garnered attention in the neo-con finishing school of Terence Blanchard's band, is a sharp young pianist who plays in a fluent sixties dialect.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through Oct. 31: The bassist **Charlie Haden** recently celebrated Latin-American composers on his recordings "Nocturne" and "Land of the Sun." The central figures from those sessions, including the pianist **Gonzalo Rubalcaba** and the saxophonist **Joe Lovanao,** join Haden in an attempt to re-create the languid atmosphere of the albums. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—**"The Colonial Andes: Tapestries and Silverwork 1530-1830."** Through Dec. 12. ♦ **"George Washington: Man, Myth, Monument."** Through Feb. 27. ♦ **"Gilbert Stuart."** Through Jan. 16. ♦ **"Romare Bearden at the Met."** Through March 6. ♦ **"China: Dawn of a Golden Age, 200-750 A.D."** Through Jan. 23. ♦ **"All That Glitters Is Not Gold: The Art, Form, and Function of Gilt Bronze in the French Interior."** Through Feb. 20. ♦ **"German Drawings and Prints from the Weimar Republic (1919-33)."** Through Oct. 31. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
The museum is closed until Nov. 20, when it will reopen in its renovated and expanded building, at 11 W. 53rd Street.

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"The Aztec Empire."** Through Feb. 13. ♦ **"Kandinsky Gallery: An Inaugural Selection."** Through May 11. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—Physical disorientation—spinning vortices, tumble-and-roll motions, equilibrium hovering on the edge of dizziness—unites the disparate elements of **Jennifer Pastor's "The Perfect Ride."** The work consists of an animated line drawing of a rodeo rider on a bucking bull (his flawless performance is the source of the title); a polyurethane model of the ear and its interior apparatus, designed from the artist's memory of medical illustrations; and a large steel-and-plastic sculpture that represents the Hoover Dam with its waters in full roil. Pastor's renditions of these engineering feats are themselves intricately engineered, one last head-spinning twist. Through Jan. 2. ♦ **"The Art of Romare Bearden."** Through Jan. 25. ♦ **Jacob Lawrence's "War Series."** Through Jan. 31. ♦ **"Memorials of War."** Through Nov. 28. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART
200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—Childhood changed in the late nineteenth century, lengthening and becoming more peaceful as restrictive child-labor laws were passed. The images in **"Great Expectations: John Singer Sargent Painting Children"** are informed by this shift and by the artist's effort to search out each child's character rather than revert to cliché. In addition to the expected scenes of beaches and birthday parties, Sargent also painted portraits of rich society kids and the progeny of his artistic peers. The children's luminous beauty is made poignant by wall texts describing what became of them amid the next century's wars and upheaval. Through Jan. 16. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, and Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—The museum's vivarium again fills with hundreds of lepidoptera, who have everything they need—warmth, nectar, tour groups—to survive in the butterfly conservatory. Through May 30. ♦ **"Frogs: A Chorus of Colors."** Through Jan. 9. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

ASIA SOCIETY
Park Ave. at 70th St. (212-517-2742)—**"Asian Games: The Art of Contest."** Through Jan. 16. ♦ **"In the Realm of Gods and Kings: Arts of India."** Through Jan. 2. ♦ **"When Gold Blossoms: Indian Jewelry from the Susan L. Beningson Collection."** Through Jan. 23. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 9.)

AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM
45 W. 53rd St. (212-265-1040)—**"Masterpieces of American Jewelry."** Through Jan. 23. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 7:30.)

COOPER-HEWITT NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 91st St. (212-849-8300)—**"Josef and Anni Albers: Designs for Living."** Through Feb. 27. ♦ **"Design ≠ Art: Functional Objects from Donald Judd to Rachel Whiteread."** Through Feb. 27. ♦ **"Faster, Cheaper, Newer, More: Revolutions of 1848."** Through Jan. 9. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 9; Saturdays, 10 to 6; and Sundays, noon to 6.)

FRICK COLLECTION
1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700)—**"European Bronzes from the Quentin Collection."** Through Jan. 2. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

JEWISH MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—**"Innovator, Activist, Healer: The Art of Friedl Dicker-Brandeis."** Through Jan. 16. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45; Thursdays, 11 to 8; and Fridays, 11 to 3.)

NEUE GALERIE
1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200)—**"Comic Grotesque: Wit and Mockery in German Art, 1870-1940."** Through Feb. 14. (Open Fridays, 11 to 9, and Saturdays through Mondays, 11 to 6.)

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
170 Central Park W., at 77th St. (212-873-3400)—**"Alexander Hamilton: The Man Who Made**

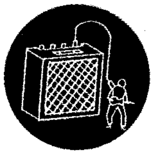
Modern America." Through Feb. 28. ♦ **"If Elected: Campaigning for the Presidency"** and **"Campaigns on Cotton."** Through Nov. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6.)

GALLERIES–CHELSEA

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

KUTLUG ATAMAN
The star of this video installation is Stefan Naumann, a monomaniacal Berliner who shares his apartment with some thirty thousand tropical moths. Footage of Naumann describing his collection and closeups of mounted specimens are shown on five shimmering screens hung at odd angles around the gallery. There's a feeling of eerie claustrophobia, a function not only of overcrowding and heat (the apartment's thermostat is set for the comfort of moths) but also of the intensity of Naumann's obsession. His unchecked passion for moths—he smells

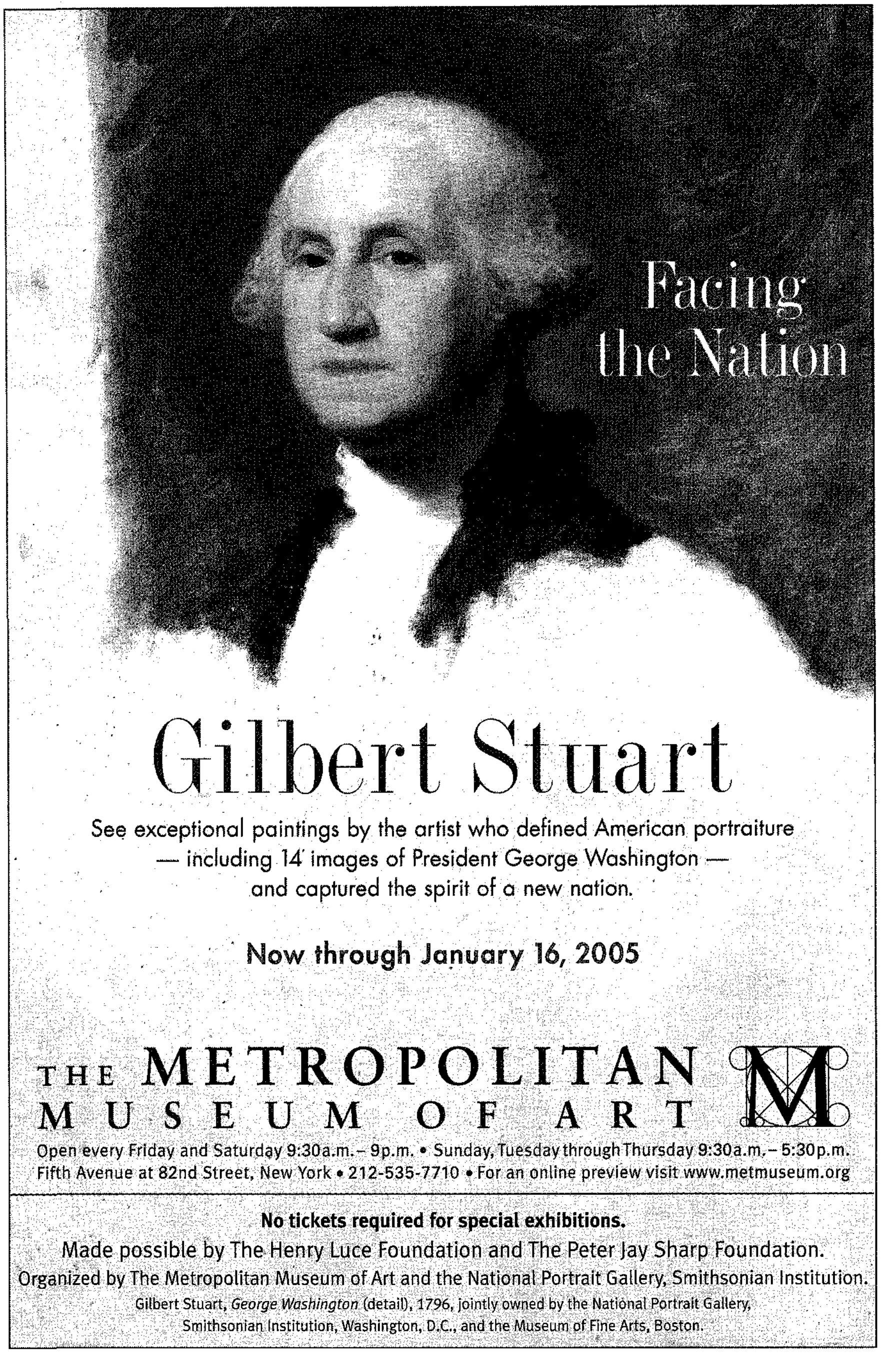
POP NOTES



LIFE AFTER DEATH
The Elliott Smith album **"From a Basement on the Hill"** (Anti-) wasn't quite finished when Smith was found dead, late last year, of two stab wounds to the chest, evidently self-inflicted. Like any pre-suicide note, the album will be subjected to intense scrutiny; look no further than the first song, which imagines relieving pain with some instrument of oblivion, whether sleep or drugs or death. So does the second song, and the third, and the fourth—in "King's Crossing," the brawniest, brashest point on the album, he admits, "I can't prepare for death more than I already have." This would be an academic exercise were it not for the fact that the record serves as a fitting memorial for Smith's career. Somewhere between the acoustic balladry of "Either/Or" and the baroque pop of "Figure 8," he began to sound like George Harrison, and he still does; in other places, he sounds like Alex Chilton, if Chilton had never disbanded Big Star and continued to turn out beautifully hopeless pop in the downbeat vein of "Sister Lovers." Some songs here are perfect, while others meander. In the end, it's hard to pass any final judgment on the album, or on Smith. Death has that effect: it both fixes things in place and exposes the futility of fixing them.

Warren Zevon's death from inoperable lung cancer last year was a well-documented tragedy, and though his final album, "The Wind," was not his best work it got more than the benefit of the doubt. **"Enjoy Every Sandwich"** (Artemis), whose title is based on a crack about the preciousness of life that Zevon made to David Letterman, is a better memento of his spiky, cynical, and sometimes tender songwriting. A dozen-odd friends and colleagues of Zevon's, from Don Henley to Billy Bob Thornton to the Wallflowers, have contributed versions of his songs. Bruce Springsteen and Bob Dylan are both represented by live renditions of Zevon rarities; Jackson Browne doubles (or erases) the irony of "Poor Poor Pitiful Me," which may well be a lampoon of the sensitive-California-singer-songwriter movement that Browne epitomized; and the Pixies take a sledgehammer, noisily, to "Ain't That Pretty at All." The two highlights come from opposite extremes. Jordan, Zevon's son, performs the previously unreleased "Studebaker," and Adam Sandler—yes, *that* Adam Sandler—turns in a surprisingly muscular performance (and keeps the mugging to a minimum) on "Werewolves of London."

—Ben Greenman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Gilbert Stuart, *George Washington* (detail), 1796, jointly owned by the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

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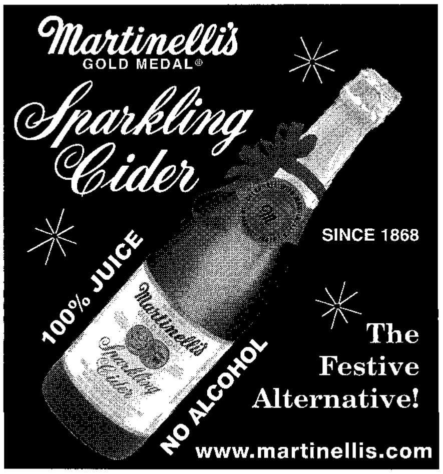
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them, he tastes them, he loves them more than anything—is deeply disturbing despite its quiet presentation. Through Oct. 30. (Lehmann Maupin, 540 W. 26th St. 212-255-2923.)

NEIL JENNEY / REE MORTON / SYLVIA PLIMACK MANGOLD

A show for aficionados of American art of the nineteen-seventies gathers transitional works by three signal artists. The painters Jenney and Plimack Mangold emerged at a death-of-painting moment and strategized, respectively, with eccentric wall reliefs in bent aluminum bars and canvases that took the measure (with painted yardsticks) of wooden floors or were shaped to perspectival views of floorboards and staircases. Both would embrace, and reinvigorate, unapologetic painting. So, surely, would the gifted installational artist Morton have done, but for her death in a car crash, in 1977. Her lovely abstract sketch, from 1973, in watercolor, pencil, and crayon on an eight-foot-high unstretched canvas anchored with leaning wooden blocks yearns toward a strictly pictorial resolution that feels just around the corner. Through Oct. 30. (Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 212-367-7474.)

"ELECTION"

This group exhibition of politically themed art includes work from Paul Chan, Hans Haacke, Martha Rosler, Carl Andre and Melissa Kretschmer, Andrea Fraser, and many others. Through Nov. 18. (American Fine Arts, 530 W. 22nd St. 212-727-7366.)

Short List

RACKSTRAW DOWNES
Cunningham, 541 W. 25th St.
212-242-2772. Through Oct. 30.

BEATRIZ MILHAZES
Cohan, 533 W. 26th St.
212-714-9500. Through Dec. 4.

GIORGIO MORANDI
Schoormans, 508 W. 26th St.
212-243-3159. Through Dec. 4.

JANE AND LOUISE WILSON
303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St.
212-255-1121. Through Nov. 6.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

ATSUKO TANAKA

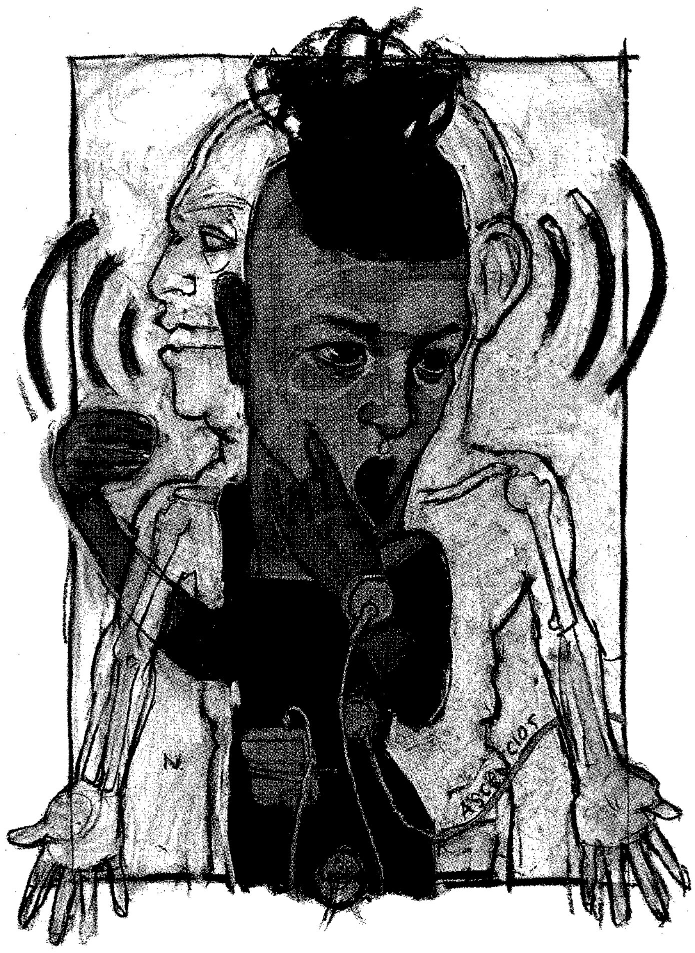
A key figure of the postwar Japanese avant-garde and early member of the art group Gutai gets a retrospective befitting the long wait. Her signature work is "Electric Dress" (1956), an illuminated performance costume that looks like a spineless Christmas tree. In "Work (Bell)," an innocuous white button activates a progression of ringing bells. Videos of nineteen-fifties performances by Gutai show artists taking Action painting to its outer limits, using their bodies as brushes or hurling jars of paint. Tanaka's own paintings are filled with colorful orbs connected by frenetic networks of lines. Through Dec. 11. (Grey Art Gallery, 100 Washington Sq. E. 212-998-6780.)

OLAV WESTPHALEN

This three-part show consists of a series of ink drawings representing incidental Americana like the commemorative plaque at Walden Pond; a group of clunky, oversized resin sculptures and drawings based on the lopsided creations of ceramics students; and a homemade archery machine that shoots arrows at the wall every few hours. Is it a composite depiction of frontier can-do-ism? A happy-go-lucky essay in gimcrack craftsmanship? The German-born artist's drippy gray drawings and lumpy pots and his makeshift wooden contraption suggest a shorthand sketch of what American culture looks like to Europeans. Through Dec. 12. (Maccarone, 45 Canal St. 212-431-4977.)

TERRY WINTERS

A bit of text, neatly typed on a strip of pink card, is collaged into one of Winters's dense, lattice-like lithographs. "No mention will be made," it reads, "of a man my mother once knew who breathed through paper." The remark comes from "Turbulence Skins," by the novelist Ben Marcus, written for a collaborative project of the same name produced with Winters. Marcus's story fragments click suggestively into Winters's grids of jittery lines, while other suites of prints and drawings gathered in "Terry Winters: Local Group/New Works on Paper" deepen the atmosphere of tense allusiveness. Through Dec. 18. (Pratt Manhattan Gallery, 144 W. 14th St. 212-647-7778.)



Pamela Z performs "Voci" at the Kitchen (see Classical Music).

N. ASCENCIOS

"ARCHITECTURE AND REVOLUTION IN CUBA, 1959-1969"

In the decade following the overthrow of Batista, Cuban architects and urban planners embarked on an ambitious program to bring modernism and socialism into harmony through poured concrete, porthole windows, and cantilevered walls. A series of black-and-white photographs documents this fervent period, in which everything was to be made new, along with site plans, publications, and a video tour of some of the surviving buildings. The modular, beehive-shaped units that made up the campus for the National Schools of Art (1965) are typical—pragmatic yet fanciful, an ideal mix of communal and private spaces. Through Dec. 11. (Storefront for Art and Architecture, 97 Kenmare St. 212-431-5795.)

"SELECTED READERS"

Patricia and Donald Oresman have amassed a large, peculiar collection, a group of more than a thousand images of people reading. A few dozen are on display at Poets House, including work by artists like Diego Rivera, Thomas Hart Benton, and Richard Diebenkorn. Joseph Cornell's assistant, Harry Roseman, photographed the master of Utopia Parkway reading in his back yard; David Hockney drew Yves-Marie de Paris reading Cocteau; and René Magritte's black-and-white photograph "L'Éminence Grise" is an off-kilter image of a bather at the beach with a book pinned to his back. Through Nov. 22. (72 Spring St. 212-431-7920.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

TIM DAVIS

"My Life in Politics" is a look at the banality of American political life. At a fast-food restaurant, Davis found a mural with various depictions of Martin Luther King, Jr., that boldly declares "One People, One Nation, One Taco, One Destiny." After being told that he couldn't use his tripod in the museum at the Nixon birthplace, in San Clemente, California, he instead photographed an iridescent oil stain in the parking lot. The tone is set with the first picture, a ripped and peeling Gilbert Stuart portrait of George Washington; the show concludes with a series of details of statues called "Founding Fathers' Crotches." Through Nov. 5. (Bohen Foundation, 415 W. 13th St. 212-414-4575.)

DAVID WOJNAROWICZ

Wojnarowicz made the "Rimbaud in New York" series in 1978 and 1979, twelve years before he died of AIDS. These small black-and-white pictures show a man—maybe Wojnarowicz himself, maybe not—wearing a paper mask made from a copy of the only known photograph of Rimbaud. Wandering through the meatpacking district, Coney Island, and the old Forty-second Street of hustlers and porno theatres, Wojnarowicz's *poète maudite* smokes cigarettes and wears a jaunty scarf. No one on the street or in the subway seems to notice this ghost in their midst, and many pictures show "Rimbaud" alone in decrepit buildings—holding a gun, masturbating, or simply lying around. Through Oct. 30. (Roth Horowitz, 160A E. 70th St. 212-717-9067.)

"3 ON THE SUBWAY"

Three exhibits mounted to coincide with the hundredth anniversary of the New York City subway system. ♦ Camilo José Vergara, a Chilean-born "urban archivist" who won a MacArthur grant, has shot pictures in and of the subway since 1970; the seventy-five color images on display, selected from tens of thousands of pictures, are identified by date and subway line, and include the usual suspects—preachers, mariachis, kids gawking out the front door of the D train on their way to Coney Island—as well as shots of trains approaching, trains receding, trains in the cityscape, trains emerging from underground, trains impastoed with graffiti, and elevated train tracks in the snow. ♦ In "Rebuilding the 1 & 9," Sam Hollenshead has documented the men and machines that rebuilt, within a year, the subway tunnel and platforms at Ground Zero. The industrial framework, the shadows, and grime make for rugged black-and-white portraits of laborers whose work, when finished, is largely invisible. ♦ Bruce Davidson's "Subway" series was last seen in its entirety at the International Center of Photography in 1981. Flesh—naked, scarred, heavily made up, and squeezing between the closing doors—is the subject of these lush color photographs. One image shows a meticulously turned-out society woman in a red straw hat and jewelry; another is of a flashy young woman riding between cars on an A train over Jamaica Bay. Through Jan. 17. (Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave., at 103rd St. 212-534-1672.)

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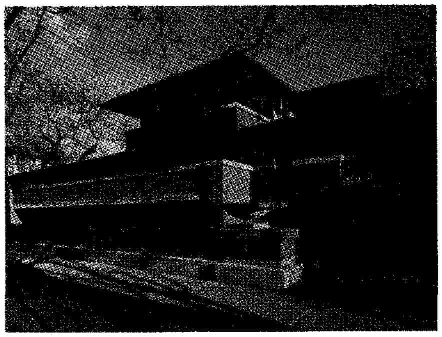
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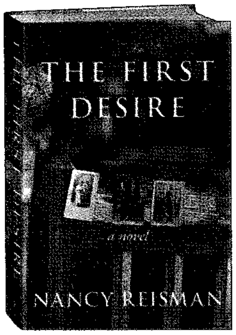

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INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
In "Looking at *Life*," two hundred prints taken for that magazine between 1936 and 1992 provide both a survey of photojournalism and a capsule history of much of the twentieth century. John Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath" began as an assignment for *Life* in migrant-labor camps in 1939 with the photographer Horace Bristol. The exhibition is organized by theme: "War" includes Robert Capa's D Day pictures and Larry Burrows's harrowing shots from Vietnam. In "Personalities," a young Cassius Clay trains underwater in a photo-essay by Flip Schulke, and Marilyn Monroe is giddy in portraits by Alfred Eisenstadt. ♦ The founder of the I.C.P., Cornell Capa, first sent by *Life* to cover Kennedy's Presidential campaign for a special Fourth of July issue in 1960, ended up documenting it from the primaries to the inauguration. The whole photogenic clan is here—Rose, looking sharp, in a frilly hat; Peter Lawford, providing Hollywood glamour; Bobby and kids; Ted and Joan—as well as icons of the times like Stevenson, Khrushchev, and de Gaulle. ♦ The digital snapshots in "Inconvenient Evidence: Iraqi Prison Photographs from Abu Ghraib" are small, unframed, and hung with strict simplicity in a small room downstairs. Some of the images first appeared in this magazine. Through Nov. 28. (1133 Sixth Ave. 212-857-0000.)

Short List

LYNN DAVIS
Houk, 745 Fifth Ave. 212-750-7070.
Through Oct. 30.
CANDIDA HÖFER
Sonnabend, 536 W. 22nd St. 212-627-1018.
Through Oct. 30.
RAGHUBIR SINGH
Sepia, 148 W. 24th St. 212-645-9444.
Through Dec. 30.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S
Oct. 27 at 10:15 A.M. and 2 and Oct. 28 at 10:15 A.M.: Madonna would have a field day at this sale of some four hundred and fifty rare Hebrew manuscripts, including treatises on Kabbalah, Biblical commentaries, sermons, and responsa, from a collection endowed by Sir Moses Montefiore, the legendary British financial broker and philanthropist. Among the lots is a fifteenth-century medical encyclopedia (carried by itinerant Jewish physicians) featuring a Kabbalistic diagram of the ten *sefirot*, or creative forces connecting God to the human world, that is expected to fetch up to a quarter of a million dollars. Even the simpler works—an Italian book, from 1818, of Hebrew poems to an admired lady, or a fifteenth-century manuscript of a dialogue about the three Western religions between a rabbi and the king of the Khazars—demonstrate breathtaking artistry and craft. ♦ Oct. 28 at 10:15 A.M.: At the dawn of painting in the caves of southern Europe, equestrian art may have been utterly mainstream, but over the past several thousand millennia it has evolved into one of the art world's most cloistered genres. Jeff and Kay Jeffords were famed Thoroughbred enthusiasts, and their collection of paintings, sculptures, and trophies is remarkable. The sale's centerpiece, an oil by A. J. Munnings from the nineteen-fifties, depicts Blue Prince II proudly carrying a jockey across an open prairie. ♦ Oct. 28 at 2 and Oct. 29 at 10:15 A.M.: Americana, English furniture, and decorative works of art from the Jeffords collection. ♦ Oct. 29 at 2: Early American silver, also owned by the Jeffords family, including a John Coney saucepan circa 1715 and a silver coffeepot by Paul Revere. ♦ Oct. 29 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: No American artist has captured the violence of the boxing ring as effectively as George Bellows, whose work (including a rare lithograph of "A Knockout," from 1921) leads off two sessions of prints from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The auction also includes European masterworks by van Gogh (one of only eighteen impressions of "The Potato Eaters"), Matisse, and Picasso ("Le Repas Frugal"). ♦ Oct. 30 at 10:15 A.M. and 2: Contemporary American works by such artists as Stella, Marden, Mitchell, and Warhol (including a screen print of "Marilyn" from 1967). (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)
CHRISTIE'S
Oct. 27 at 10 A.M. and 2: The house's second semiannual sale of nineteenth-century art exemplifies many of the styles and themes from the era, including Spanish market scenes, Venetian vistas, French country landscapes, and Orientalist figures and panoramas. The *campagne française*, with its pensive mood and light, is depicted with characteristic calm by Corot in four landscapes from the early eighteen-seventies; its urban counterpart, Parisian café culture, is captured in all its gentlemanly excess in the deep browns and reds of a brasserie scene by Jean Béraud. ♦ Nov. 2 at 1 and Nov. 3 at 10 A.M. and 2: A massive sale of prints and multiples—Christie's largest since the late eighties—includes more than six hundred and fifty lots, four hundred of which are in the postwar category (Haring, Judd, Warhol, Stella, Marden, et al.). For those with a literary inclination, there is a set of delicate, melancholy etchings made by Richard Diebenkorn to accompany an edition of poems by Yeats. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)
DOYLE
Oct. 27 at 10 A.M.: An auction of English and Continental furniture and decorations, along with a selection of Old Master paintings. (175 E. 87th St. 212-427-2730.)

TABLES FOR TWO

CAFÉ REGULAR
318A 11th St., at Fifth Ave., Brooklyn (718-768-4170)—In the narrow spaces of this tiny café, open since January and tucked away on a mostly residential street, customers shuffle carefully around each other while balancing brimming cups. Mothers leave their empty strollers outside and dash in to get hot chocolate for their toddlers ("Not too hot!") and latte for themselves. For lingerers, a bench with school-desk-size tables runs along one wall; customers face the bar like students awaiting a lesson.

The coffee is La Colombe—"from Philadelphia, by way of Seattle, by way of France," to be precise—and expertly turned out on a La Spaziale espresso machine. Josh George, the barista, inscribes a dainty fern pattern in the froth of every cappuccino. "It's all in the wrist action," he says. The espresso itself is a rich mahogany brown, slightly sweet and smooth. No sugar needed. The menu, lettered onto a mirror hanging behind the bar, promises eggs for fifty cents; one recent morning, the hard-boiled-egg rack, a stainless-steel pyramid topped by a salt shaker, stood empty on the counter. "No eggs today?" a young girl complained, apparently ready to give up the very notion of breakfast, until she was appeased by the offer of a chocolate-chip muffin. The croissants, from Marquet Pâtisserie, are golden and buttery; and the danishes are especially good—one has a chewy layer of coconut amid the flaky swirls, another is studded with raisins. The orange juice is freshly squeezed each day. To prove it, wire baskets full of oranges hang overhead.

Café Regular's European vibe—it has pressed-tin walls and an elegantly curved wooden bar complete with two (unused) metal ashtrays protruding from its side—is sophisticated and relaxed, and maybe a little bohemian: look for a posted copy of the lyrics to Bob Dylan's "One More Cup of Coffee." If you do take yours to go, you might be treated to a moment of conscientious improvisation; to forestall the prospect of a soggy bag, George has been known to lay a square of waxed paper over the mouth of an espresso drink before popping on a domed lid. (Open daily, 7:30 A.M. to 8 P.M. Coffee $1.25-$3.25.)

—*Andrea Thompson*

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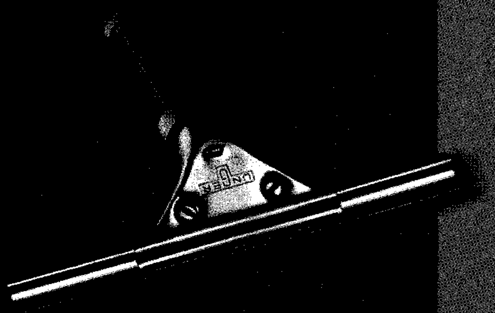

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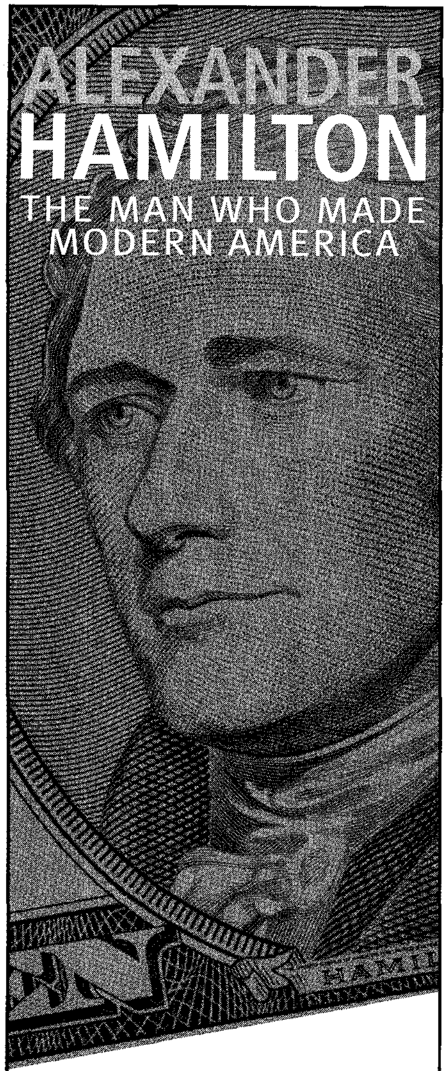

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CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
Oct. 27 at 8: **"Carmen,"** with Hei-Kyung Hong, Irina Mishura (in the title role), Fabio Armiliato (as Don José), and Ildar Abdrazakov; Plácido Domingo conducts. ♦ Oct. 30 at 8: With Eduardo Villa as Don José. ♦ Oct. 28 at 8 and Nov. 1 at 7:30: The company brings **"La Bohème"** back to the repertory with a promising cast that includes Ruth Ann Swenson, Ainhoa Arteta, Marcelo Álvarez, and Peter Mattei; Daniel Oren. ♦ Oct. 29 at 8: Sonja Frisell's 1988 staging of **"Aida,"** the crown jewel among the Met's more conservative productions, uses breathtaking sets and resplendent costumes to create a world that matches the grandeur and mystery of Verdi's music. This year's roster includes Angela M. Brown (making her début, in the title role), Dolora Zajick, Franco Farina, Anooshah Golesorkhi, and Kwangchul Youn; Marcello Viotti. ♦ Nov. 2 at 8: Fiorenza Cedolins (as Aida) and Juan Pons (replacing Golesorkhi in the role of Amonasro) return to the cast. ♦ Oct. 30 at 1:30: The Met entrusts a revival of Franco Zeffirelli's colorfully conservative production of the **"Cavalleria Rusticana" / "Pagliacci"** double bill (restaged by David Kneuss) to Dennis Russell Davies, a literal-minded conductor most admired for his work in contemporary music. Mascagni's "Cav" features Eva Urbanová (Santuzza), Jossie Pérez, Jane Shaulis, Fabio Armiliato (Turiddu), and Frederick Burchinal; Leoncavallo's "Pag" includes Daniela Dessì, Vladimir Galouzine (a formidable Canio), Juan Pons (a veteran Tonio), Mariusz Kwiecien, and Philippe Castagner. (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA
Oct. 27 at 7:30 and Oct. 29 at 8: City Opera gives Poulenc's **"Dialogues of the Carmelites"** fresh and lasting life with Tazewell Thompson's hauntingly simple new production. Rinat Shaham stands out as the novice Blanche, her youthful stature and gentle tremolo conveying both innocence and trepidation. Joyce Castle invests the role of the Old Prioress with powerful projection, piercing George Manahan's orchestral sonorities; the agony of her death scene convincingly foreshadows the entire convent's demise. The set designer Donald Eastman, in his début, offers sumptuous crimson drapery for the secular world and stark, cold stone for the religious—both dissolved at the end by gloomy sky and swirling dust, as the hymning nuns process toward the guillotine. Sung in English, just as Poulenc would have wanted. (These are the final performances.) ♦ Oct. 28 at 7:30 and Oct. 30 at 1:30: The John Copley production of **"The Marriage of Figaro"** returns, with Sharon Rostorf-Zamir (new to the company, in the role of Susanna), Orla Boylan, Jennifer Rivera, Joel Sorensen, David Pittsinger, Paulo Szot, and Jan Opalach; Steven Mosteller conducts. ♦ Oct. 30 at 8: **"La Traviata,"** with Maria Kanyova, Eric Fennell, and Grant Youngblood; Atsushi Yamada. ♦ Oct. 31 at 8: The world première of Charles Wuorinen's **"Haroun and the Sea of Stories,"** with Heather Buck (as the young boy Haroun, a short-pants role), Peter Strummer, Joel Sorensen, James Schaffner, Ryan MacPherson, Wilbur Pauley, and Michael Zegarski; Manahan (see This Week). (New York State Theatre. 212-870-5570.)

AMATO OPERA
Anthony Amato directs and conducts **"Un Ballo in Maschera,"** presented in the company's intimate landmark theatre on the Lower East Side. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 212-228-8200. Oct. 30 at 7:30 and Oct. 31 at 2:30. Through Nov. 21.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

ST. PETERSBURG PHILHARMONIC
Oct. 27 at 8: Unlike the vast and roiling sound of Valery Gergiev's Kirov Orchestra, Petersburg's other big group plays with a taut and firmly channelled energy under its longtime director, Yuri Temirkanov. In the first of two final concerts in its Carnegie Hall series, Vadim Repin joins the orchestra in music by Prokofiev, Tchaikovsky (the Violin Concerto), and Dvořák (the Symphony No. 8 in G Major). ♦ Oct. 29 at 8: Lynn Harrell is the soloist in Shostakovich's fiery Cello Concerto No. 1, the centerpiece of a concert that begins with the high spirits of Rimsky-Korsakov's "Russian Easter Overture" and concludes with the funereal gloom of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6, "Pathétique." (212-247-7800.)

BARGEMUSIC "CONCERTI CONCERTS"
Olga Bloom's floating chamber-music series makes one of its increasingly common forays into chamber-orchestra repertory, somehow fitting upward of twelve people on its tiny wave-rocked stage. These two programs feature the Knights, an informal assemblage of the Barge's talented young regulars (including the violinist Colin Jacobsen and the violist Kyle Armbrust). Oct. 28-29 at 7:30: The pianist Steven Beck and the trumpeter Joshua Frank join the strings for Shostakovich's First Piano Concerto, on a program that also includes a suite of folk songs by the iconic Armenian composer Komitas and Tchaikovsky's Serenade. ♦ Oct. 30 at 7:30 and Oct. 31 at 4: The young gallants invite the eminent flutist Paula Robison onstage for a program of folk-inspired music by Ginastera, Bartók, and Corelli ("La Folia," in a realization by Geminiani). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

ORCHESTRAS OF THE JUILLIARD SCHOOL
Oct. 29 at 8: James DePreist, the school's new director of conducting, leads the Juilliard Symphony in scores by Weber, Wagner (the "Prelude and Liebestod" from "Tristan und Isolde"), and the rock-inspired faculty composer Christopher Rouse (the smoldering Symphony No. 1). (Alice Tully Hall. For free tickets, which are required, call 212-769-7406.) ♦ Nov. 1 at 8: The Juilliard Orchestra—a little notorious as an ensemble of impatient young soloists—performs Mahler's Ninth Symphony, a marvel of concentration, conducted by Jahja Ling. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-721-6500.)

"MUSIC BEFORE 1800" SERIES:
THE CHOIR OF CORPUS CHRISTI CHURCH
The series's ensemble-in-residence at the uptown Catholic church teams up with Parthenia, the noted New York consort of viols, for an afternoon of music from the cities of Mantua and Venice circa 1600—an era that included the likes of Palestrina, Rossi, Monteverdi, and Gabrieli. (529 W. 121st St. 212-666-9266. Oct. 31 at 4.)

THE ENGLISH CONCERT
Andrew Manze, the Nigel Kennedy of early music, leads his expert ensemble in music by Mozart ("Eine Kleine Nachtmusik" and the "Adagio and Fugue"), Schmelzer, and Vivaldi (including the Concerto for Four Violins in B Minor). (Alice Tully Hall. Oct. 31 at 5. 212-721-6500.)

RECITALS

"CHAMBER MUSIC AT THE Y"
The violinist Jennifer Koh, a smart and vivacious young player, joins some lauded veterans—Jaime Laredo, Ida Kavafian, Sharon Robinson, and Leon Fleisher—for works by Prokofiev (the coruscating Sonata for Two Violins), Korngold (the captivating Suite for Two Violins, Cello, and Piano Left Hand), and Brahms (the Piano Quintet in F Minor). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. Oct. 26-27 at 8.)

ST. LUKE'S CHAMBER ENSEMBLE
David Daniels brings his dulcet countertenor to two sacred pieces by Scarlatti, on a program that also includes three works by Bach (including the Violin Concerto in A Minor and the Brandenburg Concerto No. 5). (Zankel Hall. 212-247-7800. Oct. 27 at 7:30.)

NORDIC VOICES: "STUDIES AFTER NATURE"
The noted Norwegian six-voice a-cappella ensemble sings music that explores and imitates the sounds of the natural world, ranging from the six-

teenth century (Jannequin's "Chanson des Oiseaux") to the present (Ligeti's "The Cuckoo in the Pear Tree"). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. Oct. 27 at 8.)

ARMSTRONG CHAMBER CONCERTS
The violinist Helen Armstrong's chamber collective offers concerts under the umbrella of MidAmerica productions, known for its monster choral concerts at Carnegie Hall. Oct. 27 at 8: Armstrong joins the hornist Joseph Anderer and the pianist Rohan De Silva for music by Beethoven (the Violin Sonata No. 8 in G Major), Kochelin, Brahms (the Horn Trio), and Alec Wilder. ♦ Nov. 1 at 8: The Clavier Trio (featuring the pianist David Korevaar) performs piano trios by Mendelssohn (the Trio in C Minor, Op. 66), Shostakovich, and Lowell Liebermann. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800.)

ANDRÁS SCHIFF
The piano music of two Czech giants, Janáček and Smetana, has recently been a consuming interest of this intense but lucid artist, who offers Chopin's Third Sonata along with such works as Janáček's "In the Mists" and "Sonata 1.X.1905." (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. Oct. 28 at 8.)

PAMELA Z: "VOCI"
Like Whitman, Pamela Z contains multitudes: her multimedia works (which she controls with an onstage Powerbook, along with BodySynth technology, which allows her to manipulate sounds with physical gestures) combine real-time sound processing, multitrack layering, text sampling, and video projection. But at the center of it all is the simple beauty of her classically trained voice—which can give her work an almost medieval purity. "Voci," a polyphonic one-woman opera, explores the nature and possibilities of the voice itself in a series of interrelated vignettes. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 212-255-5793. Oct. 28-30 at 8.)

MILLER THEATRE: "BACH AND PURCELL"
George Steel continues his longtime "Bach in Context" series by inviting the Trigon String Trio (who met as members of Orpheus) to perform two of the composer's trio sonatas along with a selection of fantasias by Henry Purcell, whose music is as enticingly ambiguous as Bach's is clear and steadfast. The assisting musicians include the violists Danielle Farina and Nicholas Cords. (Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 212-854-7799. Oct. 29 at 8.)

DANIEL BARENBOIM
For this commanding Israeli pianist, the preludes and fugues of Book I of Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavier" are not pristine polyphonic études but grand symphonic canvases on a miniature scale. He plays them all in his latest Carnegie Hall recital. (212-247-7800. Nov. 1 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

READINGS
Oct. 27 at 6:30: Ian Jack, the editor of *Granta*, and Bill Buford, the magazine's founder, host a reading in honor of its twenty-fifth anniversary. Linda Emond, Paul Hecht, and other actors will read stories by Alan Gurganus, Aimee Bender, David Mamet, and other contributors. The writers Nell Freudenberger, A. M. Homes, and Edmund White will also be on hand to talk about the magazine. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 212-864-5400.) ♦ Oct. 27 at 7: Jonathan Ames reads from his novel "Wake Up, Sir!," Mark Jude Poirier reads from his novel "Modern Ranch Living," and Amber Dermont reads from her fiction in the new issue of *Open City* magazine. (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ Nov. 1 at 8: Louis Auchincloss and David Lodge read from their novels. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500.)

TALKS
Oct. 27 at 6:30: Andrew Revkin, a science reporter for the *Times*, talks about his book "The Burning Season: The Murder of Chico Mendes and the Fight for the Amazon Rain Forest." (Graduate Center, City University of New York, Fifth Ave. at 34th St. 212-817-8215.) ♦ Oct. 27 at 7:30: The *New Yorker* cartoonist David Sipress interviews his colleague Leo Cullum. (Dixon Place Veteran Series at the Marquee, 356 Bowery, at Great Jones St. 212-219-0736, ext. 106.)

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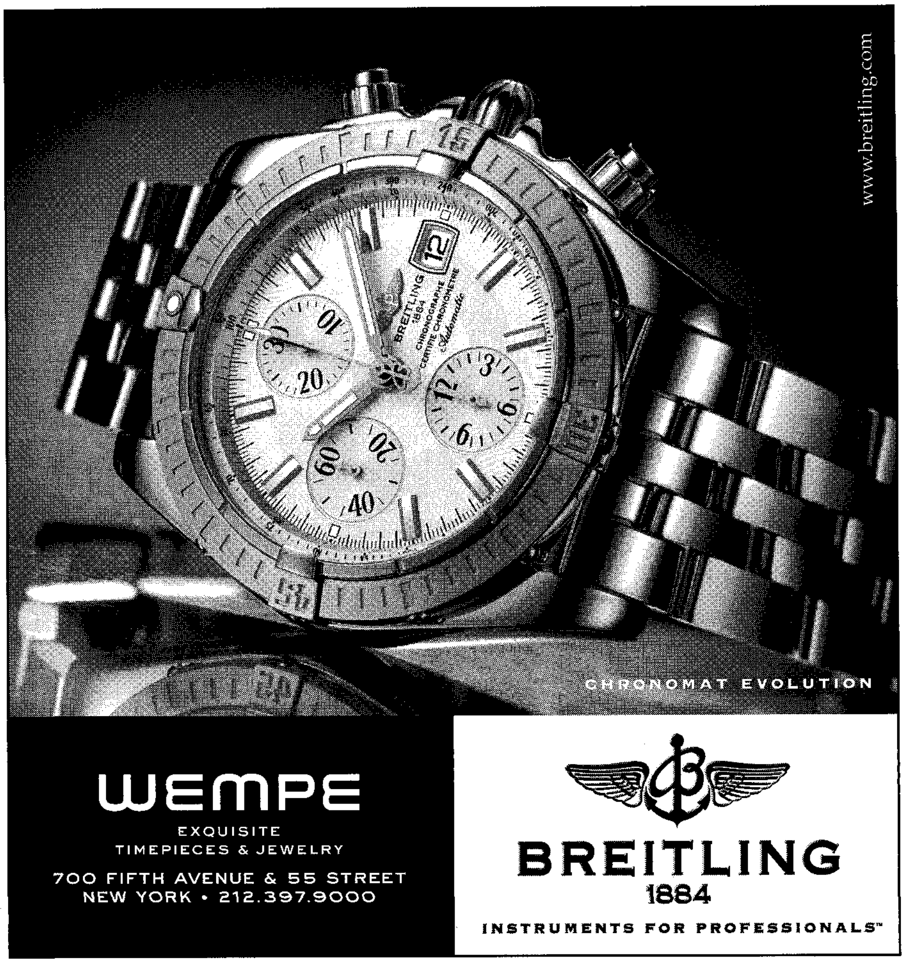
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MOVIES OPENING

BIRTH
In a thriller directed by Jonathan Glazer, Nicole Kidman plays a New York woman who believes that a ten-year-old boy (Cameron Bright) is the reincarnation of her late husband. With Lauren Bacall and Danny Huston. Opening Oct. 29.

800 BULLETS
Álex de la Iglesia's comedic tribute to Westerns, in which a young boy goes searching for his grandfather, a legendary stuntman reduced to putting on shows for tourists. In Spanish. Opening Oct. 29. (62nd & Broadway.)

ENDURING LOVE
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Oct. 29. (Lincoln Square and Union Square.)

IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
Thomas Vinterberg ("The Celebration") directed this love story with science-fiction elements, about a man (Joaquin Phoenix) who attempts to save his marriage to a figure-skating star (Claire Danes). Opening Oct. 29. (Quad Cinema.)

RAY
Jamie Foxx plays Ray Charles, in a bio-pic directed by Taylor Hackford. With Kerry Washington, Regina King, and Clifton Powell. Opening Oct. 29.

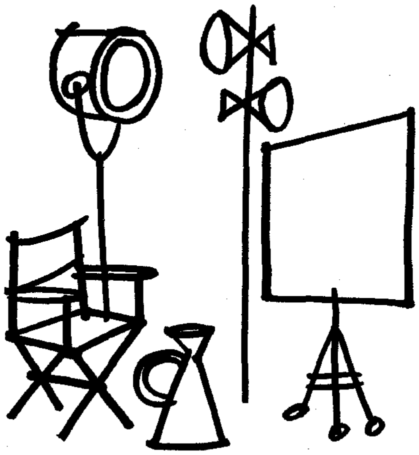
SAW
A serial killer places two men in a basement, leaving instructions for one (Leigh Whannell) to kill the other (Cary Elwes). Directed by James Wan, who co-wrote the film with Whannell. Opening Oct. 29.

A SILENT LOVE
A middle-aged schoolteacher from Canada finds a Mexican bride over the Internet, in a comedy written and directed by Federico Hidalgo. Opening Oct. 29. (Quad Cinema.)

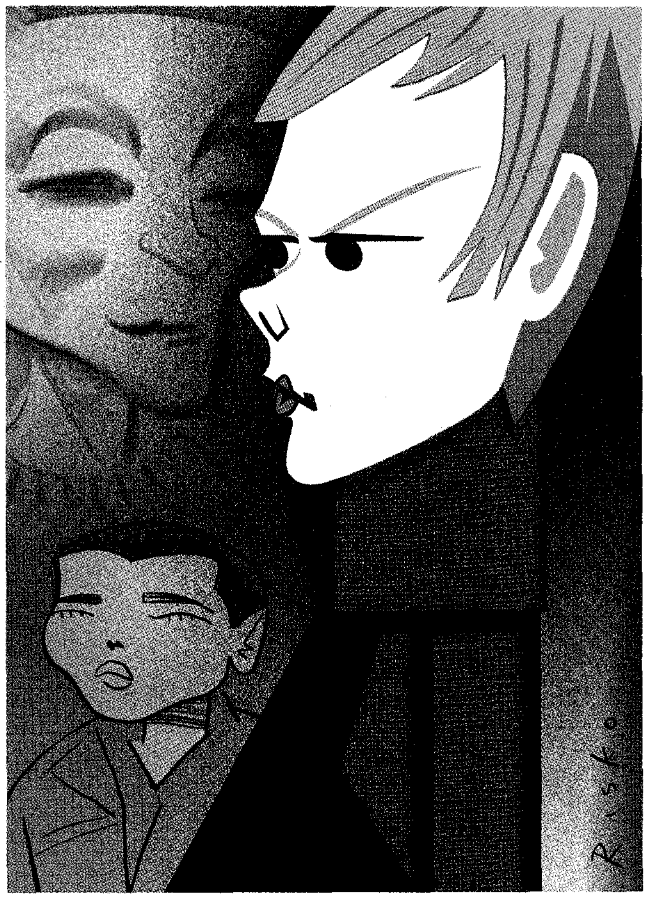
FILM NOTES

ALI G INDAHOUSE
For about a third of this 2002 movie's scatological and horny eighty-eight minutes, Sacha Baron Cohen's alter ego, the white British gangsta rapper Ali G, achieves high-resolution low comedy. Too bad the makeshift plot Cohen cooked up with Dan Mazer—about the attempt by an evil Deputy Prime Minister (Charles Dance) to use Ali G to bring down the Prime Minister (Michael Gambon)—isn't nearly as funny as the deadpan interviews that made Ali G a television sensation. In the peak scenes, such as the one in which Ali G conducts a "Keep It Real" class for a bunch of game eight-year-olds, Cohen both celebrates and sends up adolescent humor, and the self-satire can be explosively funny.—*Michael Sragow* (BAM Rose Cinemas; Nov. 1-2.)

ALL THE KING'S MEN
Robert Rossen's 1949 prize-winner has a scrambling, brawling gusto: it's all over the place in a good way. Adapting Robert Penn Warren's great American novel about a down-home dictator who closely resembles Huey Long, Rossen doesn't aim to capture the book's full range of ideas and emotions. But he creates an environment that seethes with hunger, anger, greed, and chaos. The movie can be heartbreaking and powerful even when it's crude, as when Rossen cuts from the carnage caused by a broken public-school fire escape to the delicate voice of a preacher reading the Bible over the victims' graves. That incident clinches Willie Stark's political destiny—he's already campaigned against corrupt county building practices. Broderick Crawford seizes on the role of Stark: the reporter Jack Burden (John Ireland) at first views him as a latter-day Abe Lincoln, but Crawford always suggests the brute beneath the fighting populist words. He's joltingly potent; he looks as if he could build roads with his bare hands. (Academy Awards went to the picture, to Crawford, and to Mercedes McCambridge, for Best Supporting Actress, as political hatchet-woman Sadie Burke.)—*M.S.* (Thalia Theatre; Oct. 31.)



BEING JULIA
It's easy to forget about the talent of Annette Bening—she makes a movie and then disappears for a while to take care of the Beatty clan (four children, plus Warren). Those who seek out this film can revel once again in her actorly grace. It's a thirties period piece, in which Bening plays a limelight-loving stage actress who is having an affair with a selfish youth (Shaun Evans). Jeremy Irons shines in the role of her stage-manager husband, and the story, based on a Somerset Maugham novel, brims with sardonic humor. István Szabó's direction may lack the spark to awaken the story's true histrionics, but Bening delivers such juicy joie de vivre that the lacklustre camerawork hardly matters.—*Bruce Diones* (Paris and Union Square.)



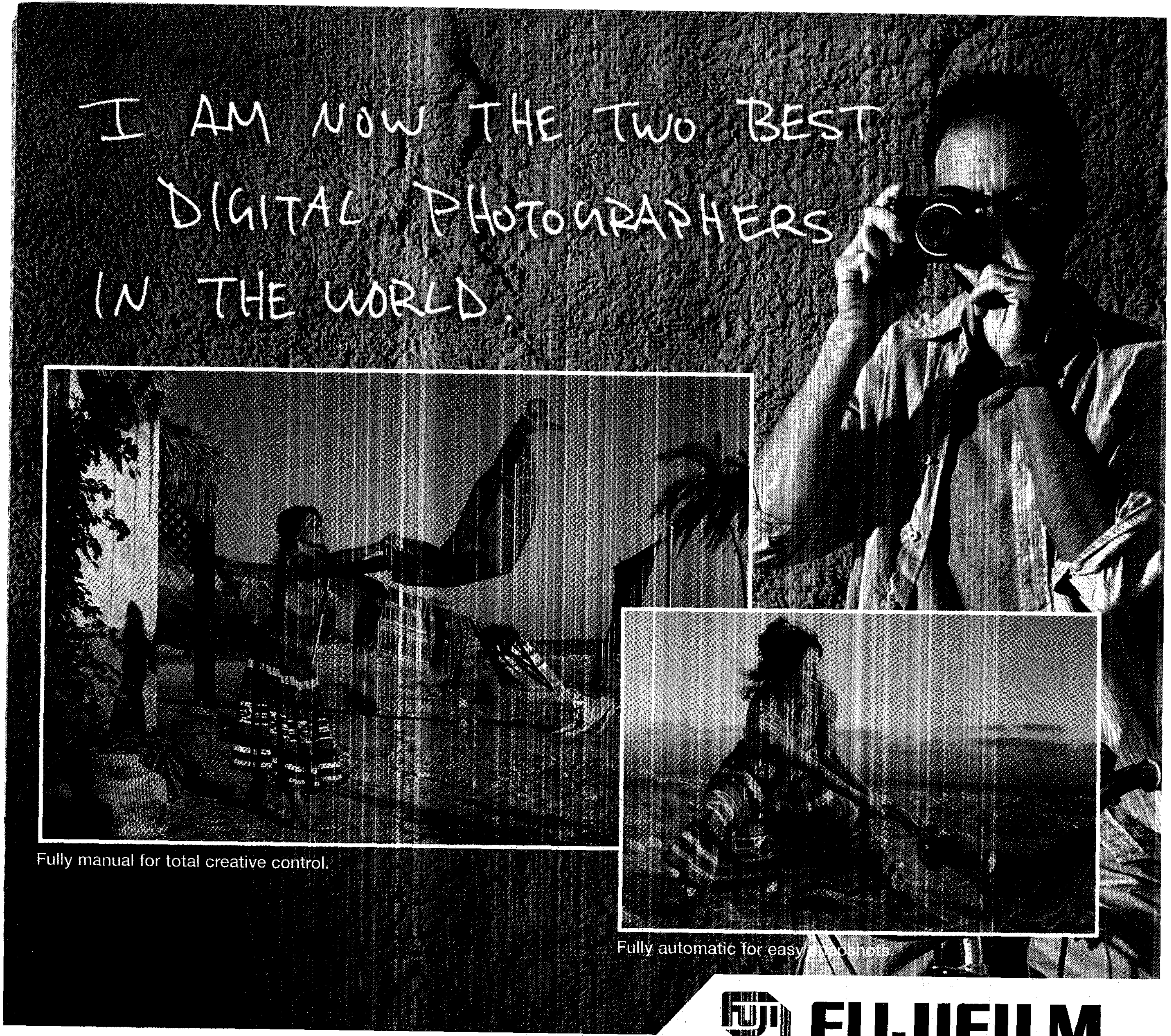
Nicole Kidman in "Birth," opening October 29.

ROBERT RISKO

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS
Buzz Bissinger's remarkable book about a high-school football team in Texas oil country gets a worthy, slightly rock-video adaptation in the hands of the director Peter Berg. Sure, there are plenty of shots of the players staring intently at the field and swooping bird's-eye views of the stadium, but Berg pays attention to the story's harsher details, too—the "For Sale" signs planted in front of the coach's house when he loses a big game, a wrenching scene in which an African-American player breaks down after a devastating knee injury. By shooting the film in closeup, with a jittery frame and a documentary feel, Berg conveys the future-blinding intensity of small-town high-school sports, at a time when a seventeen-year-old can really believe that his life is peaking on the fifty-yard line. The cast of players includes Derek Luke, Lucas Black, and Garrett Hedlund. With Billy Bob Thornton as the coach.—*Michael Agger* (Battery Park 11, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

I ♥ HUCKABEES
David O. Russell's new satire is an authentic disaster peppered with many odd and brilliant moments. The characters, skittering along the edges of the frame, speak only about Big Ideas, say everything four times, quarrel at the drop of a non sequitur, and have sex in uncomfortable places. The hero, one Albert Markovski (Jason Schwartzman), is the head of an open-spaces conservation group, and he makes a deal with a rising young executive (Jude Law) at Huckabees, a superstore chain, to preserve some woods. Yet Albert, a surly little hysteric, feels lost, so he hires two "existential detectives" (Dustin Hoffman and Lily Tomlin) to find out what's wrong with him. The true existentialist, however, is Caterine Vauban (Isabelle Huppert), a sexy *philosophe* in a limo who believes that life (as it says on her business card) is "cruelty, manipulation, meaninglessness." She and Albert make love on a log. There's much more, all of it devoted to a quarrel between two philosophical viewpoints—that everything is connected and that everything is separate. Russell embraces both sides—there are messy scenes in which everyone talks at once and saner moments, when the eccentricities of the individual characters stand out. With Mark Wahlberg, who is touching and funny as a fireman with nothing on his mind but petroleum. Jeff Baena worked on the garrulous screenplay with Russell.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 10/4/04.) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 11, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

INFERNAL AFFAIRS
Some viewers have found themselves challenged by the intricate plot of this film, but anybody used to disentangling an entire bowl of noodles should have no problem. What we have is a little mole-on-mole action, revolving around a couple of Hong Kong cops (Tony Leung and Andy Lau). One works undercover, reporting from the entourage of a drug lord (Eric Tsang). The other works openly for the police department, but secretly as a snitch for the same villain. Neither policeman knows what the other looks like, and it takes a flurry of nervous pursuits and rooftop encounters before the scales fall from their eyes. The movie presents itself as a stack of character studies, but the leads are constructed from layers of impassive cool, and the roles for women—a shrink, an old flame—are comically fleeting. What makes the picture work is its unflagging devotion to the play of gleam and shadow: to a vision of Hong Kong as a natural hotbed of treason and double cross. For those who need a fix of further confusion, two sequels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are ready and waiting in the wings. With Anthony Wong as the police chief, who suffers an amazing fall from grace. In Cantonese.—*Anthony Lane* (9/20/04) (Village East Cinemas.)

THE MOTORCYCLE DIARIES

In 1952, a medical student called Ernesto Guevara de la Serna (Gael García Bernal) teamed up with his friend Alberto Granado (Rodrigo de la Serna), a biochemist, and journeyed eight thousand miles through South America. The tale of their travels is the basis for Walter Salles's ravishing, suggestive, and faintly superfluous film. Both young men are of middle-class Argentinean stock, and Ernesto has a girlfriend so rich and beautiful that her family's estate, as Alberto notes, looks like Switzerland. If he had stayed with her, Latin-American history might have taken a more placid turn; instead, Ernesto remounted his motorbike, headed into the Andes, and began the determined process of turning into Che Guevara. The film is sprinkled with gestures toward that future, especially when the two men work at a leper colony on the Amazon, but the foreshadowing doesn't always convince; the sequence in which they meet a pair of wandering Communists on the road and drink in the saga of their suffering is biographically accurate, yet it feels dramatically forced. In the end, the film might best be read as a high-class, episodic buddy picture, with the tubby, more skeptical Alberto (he's like a young Robert Donat) observing with interest the spark of indignation—and the air of chaste reticence—in his impossibly handsome pal.—*A.L.* (9/27/04) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 11, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and Sunshine Cinema.)

At Walter Reade Theatre, Bob Clark's "Black Christmas" and other horror gems.

YUKO SHIMIZU

PRIMER

A talky, fascinating sci-fi thriller about a group of engineers who begin fiddling with the space-time continuum. The writer and director Shane Carruth's practically no-budget time-machine story may be short on special effects, but the rapid-fire philosophical patter of his script (What is the nature of the universe? What are the moral implications of changing the past?) would meet with the approval of both Rod Serling and Carl Sagan.—*B.D.* (Angelika Film Center and Empire 25.)

P.S.

The second feature film from Dylan Kidd, who leapt to our attention with the scurrilous "Roger Dodger." The new picture stars Laura Linney as a mousy director of admissions at Columbia, who, one day, refines her selection process by having sex with a young applicant (Topher Grace). The reason for this unorthodox approach is that he shares a name with a former sweetheart of hers, now dead; as motives go, it doesn't sound that strong, and you wouldn't trust her with a phone directory, but still. The rest of the movie hovers and quavers around that initial act. The heroine's ex-husband (Gabriel Byrne) confesses to his own carnal excess, looking none too pleased about it; her best friend (Marcia Gay Harden), understandably intrigued, arrives in town and introduces the now bewildered student to her cleavage; and the kid himself stays cool, presumably wondering what these messed-up adults are so concerned about. He has a point. Kidd's film lacks the bite and nerve of its predecessor; it glides along in the service of a whiny wistfulness. As a guide to college-entrance procedures, of course, it's unsurpassed.—*A.L.* (10/18/04) (Empire 25 and Village East Cinemas.)

SHARK TALE

Dreamworks, the Avis of computer-generated animation, may try harder, but, once again, it delivers an artistic disappointment. A fish called Oscar (Will Smith) becomes a celebrity after mistakenly winning a shark fight. Though his fellow undersea creatures have been designed to resemble the stars who voice them (Martin Scorsese, Robert De Niro, Renée Zellweger, Jack Black), this does more damage than good—the script is filled with hollow references to past films.—*B.D.* (Battery Park 11, Chelsea West, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)

SHAUN OF THE DEAD

It is only natural to be scared of zombies, and to prevent them from laying waste to your home. A more relaxing approach, however, is to be bored and vaguely annoyed by them, or, better still, not to notice them in the first place. This is the premise of Edgar Wright's British comedy, which may be responsible for kicking off a new and specialized genre of slacker horror. Shaun (Simon Pegg) lives a supremely uneventful life, which revolves around his girlfriend (Kate Ashfield), his mother (Penelope Wilton), and, above all, his local pub. This gentle routine is threatened when the dead return to life and make strenuous attempts to snack on ordinary Londoners. The finale, in which the pub turns into an Alamo, is the bloodiest, most orthodox, and least witty part of the movie; far sharper are the early scenes in which Shaun wanders happily to the local store along a battered, zombie-dotted street and pulps his attackers with a cricket bat. The central joke is so snappy and well sustained that you barely catch sight of the ominous vision on offer: a country that already feels like death.—*A.L.* (9/27/04) (Empire 25, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

SIDEWAYS

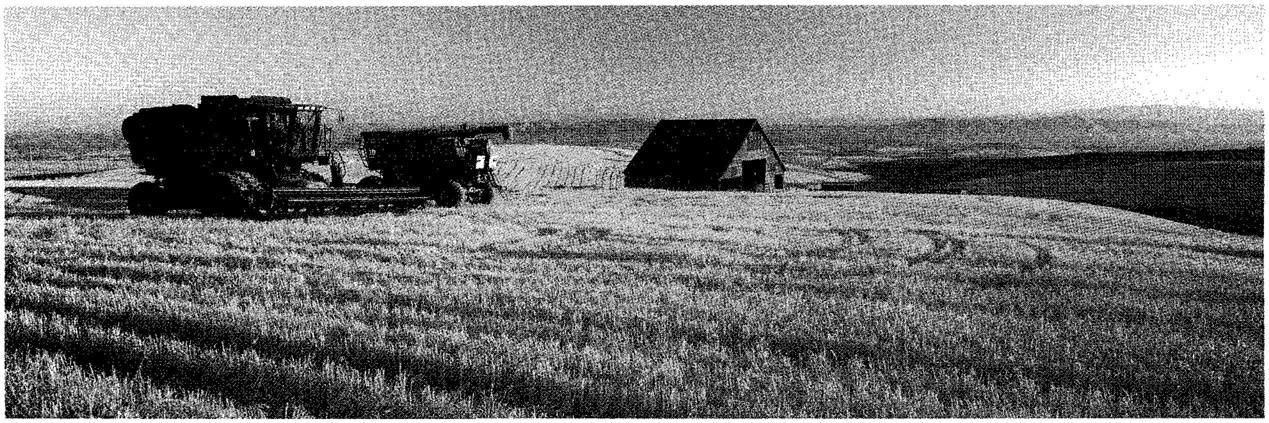
Paul Giamatti has no chin to speak of, a round-shouldered physique, and the nervous smile of a craven dog. He's the anti-ideal of the American male, and he's making a brilliant career of it. In this wonderful new movie by the team of Alexander Payne (writer-director) and Jim Taylor (co-writer), Giamatti plays Miles, a failed novelist around forty who takes off for a wine-tasting tour with his buddy Jack (Thomas Haden Church), a washed-up TV actor who is about to get married. What starts as a last fling at freedom becomes for the two men—but centrally for Miles—a confrontation with middle age and stasis. Miles is a bibliophile, a cinephile, and an oenophile. Jack, however, couldn't care less—in every way, he's blissfully undiscriminating. On the road, the men meet Maya (Virginia Madsen), a divorced graduate student who works as a waitress, and Stephanie (Sandra Oh), a sexy "pour girl." The music and the camera setups are at times pedestrian, but the rest of "Sideways" is vivid and bitterly funny. A comedy poised on the edge of despair, the picture asks the question: How do you stop moving sideways? Or, more metaphorically: Won't a Cheval Blanc '61, if left too long on the shelf, begin to lose its savor?—*D.D.* (10/25/04) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Union Square.)

SKY CAPTAIN AND THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

At first, it might seem curious that the writer-director Kerry Conran chose to use his digital wizardry to re-create the look of Fritz Lang's "Metropolis" and other Expressionist films, but the nineteen-twenties were a time when the language of film was in a fluid, experimental stage, as directors refined their use of montage, transparency, and camera effects. Now, with the increased realism of computer-generated images, directors like Conran seem propelled by a new sense of possibility about what can be accomplished onscreen. In any event, "Sky Captain" is an impressive technical achievement, seamlessly integrating A-list actors into an imaginary world—only, at times, one wishes that this world weren't so dark (literally). Would Conran's computer renderings seem fake in full daylight, or is his commitment to noir just a shade too extreme? His dedication to the celluloid past, however, is beyond question—among the plentiful homages is one to the immortal Laurence Olivier, who has a cameo from the crypt. The story is a pastiche of classic sci-fi adventures, with Jude Law as an aviator and Gwyneth Paltrow as a reporter on the trail of a doomsday cult. If the movie is powered more by its rousing, brassy score than by its emotional connections, the slack is taken up by the continuous revelation of Conran's visual inventions.—*M.A.* (Battery Park 11, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

STAGE BEAUTY

Billy Crudup, with a slender waist, long lashes, and a bit of a flirtatious pucker, is Ned Kynaston, the reigning Desdemona, Ophelia, and Juliet of the early Restoration period. When the theatre-loving Charles II decrees that henceforth women shall play



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women, Kynaston is replaced by his dresser, Maria (Claire Danes), who imitates his stylized, Kabuki-like "female" gestures and isn't very good as a woman. Can the homosexual Kynaston play a man onstage? Or in bed? This coarse-grained semi-successor to "Shakespeare in Love" is roistering and appetitive, and the camera rushes about meaninglessly (the theatre director Richard Eyre seems to be demonstrating that he can be as "cinematic" as anyone). Crudup doesn't do badly in the role, but one feels sorry for him—people are always pulling up Kynaston's gown and reaching for his member to see if he's really a man. The movie is unconvincing and graceless, and weirdly anachronistic and overexplicit about gender issues. With Tom Wilkinson as a theatre manager and the dreadful, movie-wrecking Rupert Everett as Charles II. The American writer Jeffrey Hatcher adapted his own play.—*D.D.* (10/11/04) (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Sunshine Cinema.)

TARNATION

"Notes from the Underground" hits the age of the iMac, and it's not a pretty sight. Jonathan Caouette is a young Texan filmmaker who was raised in dismaying, sometimes brutal, circumstances and who has now trawled through them for evidence. The result is part trip, part secret journal, spliced together into a lurid public memorandum. We learn of his mother, Renee, who, by the time she bore Jonathan, in the early nineteen-seventies, had already suffered electric-shock treatment and a violent marriage. Her son was farmed out to foster parents, who maintained the cycle of harm. There is one scene in which, as a boy of eleven, he stages a plaintive drag act, and, watching it, you can barely imagine a more disturbed child; whether such disturbance makes for coherent, let alone tactful, filmmaking is another question. There are moments of graphic beauty here (Gus Van Sant, unsurprisingly, was the executive producer), but also smears of unpleasantness; if the middle-aged, once radiant Renee is now a picture of emotional damage, is it right for a loving son to trap her ravings on camera and put them on show?—*A.L.* (10/18/04) (Film Forum.)

TEAM AMERICA: WORLD POLICE

Trey Parker and Matt Stone, the unruly spirits behind the "South Park" series, return with their second feature film, a satirical extravaganza with an all-puppet cast. The puppets have large, lambent eyes, and, compared to some Hollywood stars, their faces are actually very expressive. Parker and Stone have a lot of devious fun with their helpless toys: they blow them up, feed them to fish, and capture them in gymnastic moments of intimacy (this last stunt almost earned the film an NC-17 rating). The story has a team of U.S. Special Forces flying out of their base inside Mt. Rushmore to find weapons of mass destruction, a scenario that provides plenty of opportunity to mock G.I. Joe heroism, where America is always coming to save the day! Parker and Stone's recklessness has (and evokes) a certain giddiness, but this is satire delivered via body blows. The best moments are the subtler scenes about the craft of acting (which turns out to be a crucial weapon against terrorists) and the songs, with their improbable lyrics. The movie's surreal high point may be a puppet pining for his true love while crooning about Michael Bay.—*M.A.* (Battery Park 11, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

VERA DRAKE

In its limited way, perfect. The title character in Mike Leigh's new movie is a middle-aged cleaning lady (Imelda Staunton) who races through her London working-class neighborhood singing to herself. The time is 1950, and though the dark and depressed city still suffers from wartime austerities Vera brings the light. The short, pudding-faced woman drops in on invalids, offers a few words of sympathy, and then makes her way to the luxurious flats of the wealthy, whose objets d'art and fireplace grills she dusts and polishes, sometimes on her knees. Vera gives of herself freely and easily, and it is precisely in that selfless and attentive way—brisk, efficient, consoling—that, using a tube and a noxious solution, she terminates one unwanted pregnancy after another. Working with an almost preternatural calm, Leigh sets up the repressive and sexually inarticulate atmosphere of the time; Vera's furtive activity is part of an entire system of shadowy reticence and embarrassed dithering. And Leigh captures, without sentimentality or condescension, the grave and stoical spirit of the English working class. The movie is hushed and intense; it evokes an entire way of life. With Phil Davis as Vera's husband, Stan. Photographed, with immaculate fidelity to a dun-colored London, by Dick Pope.—*D.D.* (10/11/04) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Cinema 2, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, and Lincoln Square.)

ALSO PLAYING

DIG!
Sunshine Cinema.
THE GRUDGE
Battery Park 11, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.
MARIA FULL OF GRACE (7/26/04)
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Sunshine Cinema, and Sutton 1 and 2.
MOOLAADÉ
Cinema Village and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.
POSTMEN IN THE MOUNTAINS
Cinema Village.
UNDERTOW
Lincoln Square and Union Square.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 212-777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 11, West St. at Vesey St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363).
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (212-398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (212-757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 66th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800).
Pioneer Theatre, 155 E. 3rd St. (212-254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Sunshine Cinema, 143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182).
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—"Fist & Sword." Oct. 28 at 7: "Ong-Bak: Muay Thai Warrior" (2004, Prachya Pinkaew; in Thai). ♦ Through Oct. 30: A Ken Russell retrospective. Oct. 30 at 2: "Valentino" (1977). ♦ Oct. 30 at 4:30: "Gothic" (1986). ♦ Oct. 30-31 at 6:30: "Altered States" (1980). ♦ Oct. 31 at noon: "Dance of the Seven Veils" (1970). ♦ Oct. 31 at 2: "Lair of the White Worm" (1988). ♦ Oct. 31 at 4: "Whore" (1991).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES

32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5110)—Through Oct. 31: Two Polish films based on the writing of Witold Gombrowicz. Oct. 28 and Oct. 30 at 7 and Oct. 29 and Oct. 31 at 9:30: "30 Door Key" (1991, Jerzy Skolimowski). ♦ Oct. 28 and Oct. 30 at 9 and Oct. 29 and Oct. 31 at 7: "Pornography" (2003, Jan Jakub Kolski). ♦ Through Oct. 31: "John Zorn and the Essential Cinema Band," film screenings accompanied by live original soundtracks. Oct. 29 at 8: "Ken Jacobs's Nervous Magic Lantern." ♦ Oct. 29 at 10: New documentaries. ♦ Oct. 30 at 8: Joseph Cornell films. ♦ Oct. 30 at 10: Harry Smith and Wallace Berman films. ♦ Oct. 31 at 8: Maya Deren films. ♦ Oct. 31 at 10: Kenneth Anger films. ♦ "Essential Cinema." Oct. 30 at 5: Three films by Man Ray (1923-27). ♦ Halloween screening. Oct. 31 at 5: "Mad Monster Party" (1966, Jules Bass) and "Annabel Lee" (2001, Bass).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS

30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Oct. 27-30: A Roy Andersson retrospective. All films are in Swedish. Oct. 27 at 7:30: Commercials and short works. ♦ Oct. 28 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "A Swedish Love Story" (1970). ♦ Oct. 29 at 3, 6, and 9: "Giliap" (1975). ♦ Oct. 30 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Songs from the Second Floor" (2000). ♦ Halloween screening. Oct. 31 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Halloween III: Season of the Witch" (1982, Tommy Lee Wallace). ♦ Special event. Nov. 1-2 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Ali G Indahouse" (†).

FILM FORUM

W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Oct. 27-Nov. 2 at 1, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, and 9:40: "Hearts and Minds" (1974, Peter Davis).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL

55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—Through Nov. 16: "Sisters: Dorléac and Deneuve." Nov. 2 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "All the Gold in the World" (1961, René Clair; in French).

SUNSHINE CINEMA

143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—Midnight movies. Oct. 29-30: "Tim Burton's Nightmare Before Christmas" (1993, Henry Selick).

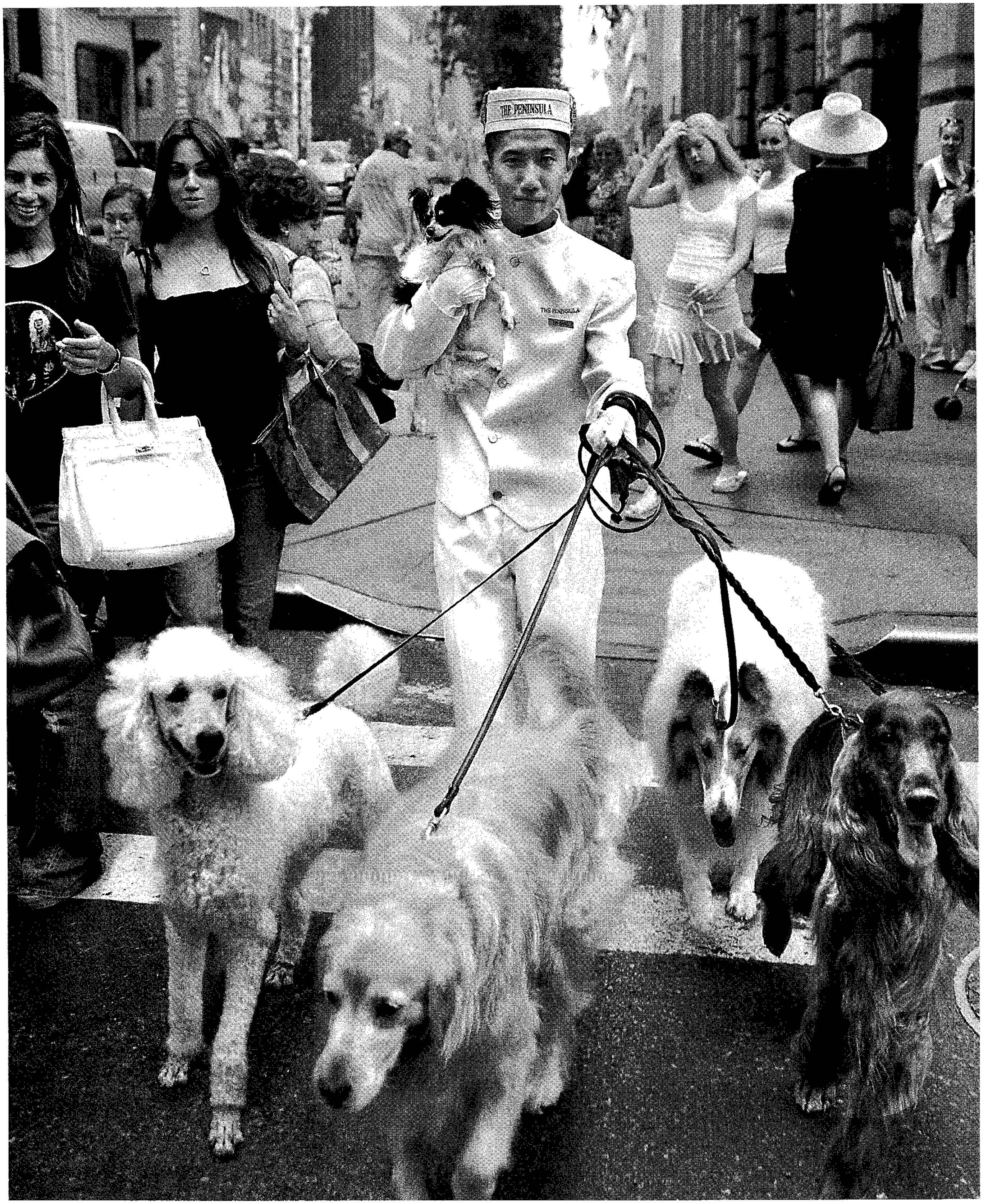
THALIA THEATRE

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—Through Oct. 31: A tribute to the documentarian Emile de Antonio. Oct. 31 at 7: "Mr. Hoover and I" (1989). ♦ Oct. 31 at 8:45: "All the King's Men" (†).

WALTER READE THEATRE

Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through Oct. 28: Recent films from Hong Kong. All films are in Cantonese. Oct. 27 at 1: "P.T.U." (2003, Johnnie To). ♦ Oct. 27 at 2:45 and 6:45: "July Rhapsody" (2002, Ann Hui). ♦ Oct. 27 at 4:50 and 8:50 and Oct. 28 at 4: "Inner Senses" (2002, Lo Chi-Leung). ♦ Oct. 28 at 2 and 9: "Throw Down" (2004, To). ♦ Starting Oct. 29: "Scary Movies 2: The Horror Continues." Oct. 29 at 3 and 7: "The Masque of the Red Death" (1964, Roger Corman). ♦ Oct. 29 at 5 and Oct. 30 at 7:30: "The Tomb of Ligeia" (1965, Corman). ♦ Oct. 29 at 9, Oct. 30 at 1:30, and Oct. 31 at 7: "Blood on Satan's Claw" (1970, Piers Haggard). ♦ Oct. 30 at 3:30 and 9:15: "The Devil Rides Out" (1967, Terence Fisher). ♦ Oct. 30 at 5:30 and Oct. 31 at 3: "Burn, Witch, Burn!" (1962, Sidney Hayers). ♦ Oct. 31 at 5 and 9: "Halloween" (1979, John Carpenter). ♦ Nov. 1 at 2:15 and 6:45: "The Other" (1972, Robert Mulligan). ♦ Nov. 1 at 4:30 and 9: "Black Christmas" (1974, Bob Clark). ♦ Nov. 2 at 4 and 9: "Vampyres" (1974, José Larraz). ♦ Special event: "On Set with French Cinema." Nov. 2 at 6: "Friday Night" (2002, Claire Denis; in French), introduced by the director.

HONG KONG NEW YORK CHICAGO BEVERLY HILLS BANGKOK BEIJING MANILA TOKYO 2007



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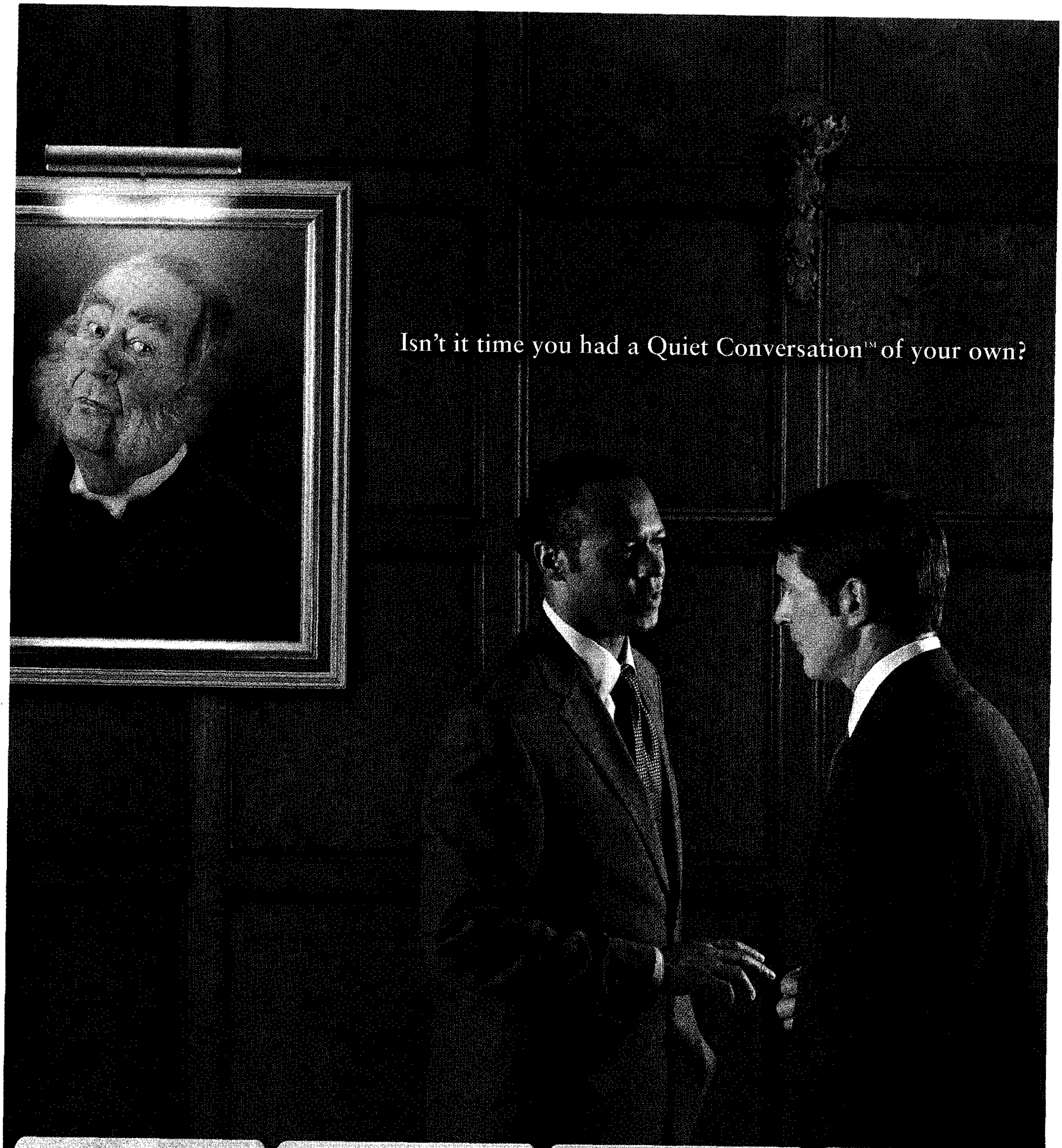
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THE
NEW YORKER

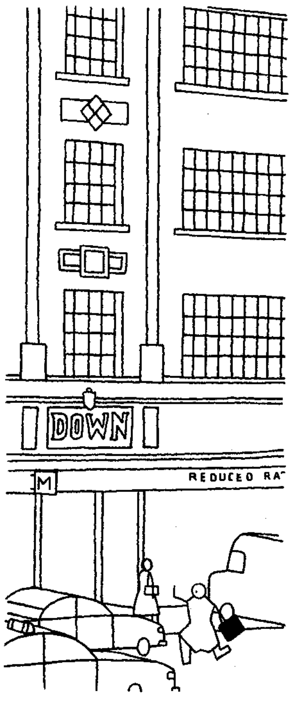
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
THE CHOICE

This Presidential campaign has been as ugly and as bitter as any in American memory. The ugliness has flowed mostly in one direction, reaching its apotheosis in the effort, undertaken by a supposedly independent group financed by friends of the incumbent, to portray the challenger—who in his mid-twenties was an exemplary combatant in both the Vietnam War and the movement to end that war—as a coward and a traitor. The bitterness has been felt mostly by the challenger's adherents; yet there has been more than enough to go around. This is one campaign in which no one thinks of having the band strike up "Happy Days Are Here Again."

The heightened emotions of the race that (with any luck) will end on November 2, 2004, are rooted in the events of three previous Tuesdays. On Tuesday, November 7, 2000, more than a hundred and five million Americans went to the polls and, by a small but indisputable plurality, voted to make Al Gore President of the United States. Because of the way the votes were distributed, however, the outcome in the electoral college turned on the outcome in Florida. In that state, George W. Bush held a lead of some five hundred votes, one one-thousandth of Gore's national margin; irregularities, and there were many, all had the effect of taking votes away from Gore; and the state's electoral machinery was in the hands of Bush's brother, who was the governor, and one of Bush's state campaign co-chairs, who was the Florida secretary of state.

Bush sued to stop any recounting of the votes, and, on Tuesday, December 12th, the United States Supreme Court gave him what he wanted. Bush v. Gore was so shoddily reasoned and transparently partisan that the five justices who endorsed the decision declined to put their names on it, while the four dissenters did not bother to conceal their disgust. There are rules for settling electoral disputes of this kind, in federal and state law and in the Constitution itself. By ignoring them—by cutting off the process and installing Bush by fiat—the Court made a mockery not only of popular democracy but also of constitutional republicanism.



A result so inimical to both majority rule and individual civic equality was bound to inflict damage on the fabric of comity. But the damage would have been far less severe if the new President had made some effort to take account of the special circumstances of his election—in the composition of his Cabinet, in the way that he pursued his policy goals, perhaps even in the goals themselves. He made no such effort. According to Bob Woodward in "Plan of Attack," Vice-President Dick Cheney put it this way: "From the very day we walked in the building, a notion of sort of a restrained presidency because it was such a close election, that lasted maybe thirty seconds. It was not contemplated for any length of time. We had an agenda, we ran on that agenda, we won the election—full speed ahead."

The new President's main order of business was to push through Congress a program of tax reductions overwhelmingly skewed to favor the very rich. The policies he pursued through executive action, such as weakening environmental protection and cutting off funds for international family-planning efforts, were mostly unpopular outside what became known (in English, not Arabic) as "the base," which is to say the conservative movement and, especially, its evangelical component. The President's enthusiastic embrace of that movement was such that, four months into the Administration, the defection of a moderate senator from Vermont, Jim Jeffords,

ILLUSTRATIONS BY LAURENT CILLUFFO

cost his party control of the Senate. And, four months after that, the President's political fortunes appeared to be coasting into a gentle but inexorable decline. Then came the blackest Tuesday of all.

September 11, 2001, brought with it one positive gift: a surge of solidarity, global and national—solidarity with and solidarity within the United States. This extraordinary outpouring provided Bush with a second opportunity to create something like a government of national unity. Again, he brushed the opportunity aside, choosing to use the political capital handed to him by Osama bin Laden to push through more elements of his unmandated domestic program. A year after 9/11, in the midterm elections, he increased his majority in the House and recaptured control of the Senate by portraying selected Democrats as friends of terrorism. Is it any wonder that the anger felt by many Democrats is even greater than can be explained by the profound differences in outlook between the two candidates and their parties?

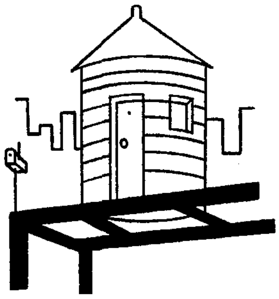
The Bush Administration has had success in carrying out its policies and implementing its intentions, aided by majorities—political and, apparently, ideological—in both Houses of Congress. Substantively, however, its record has been one of failure, arrogance, and—strikingly for a team that prided itself on crisp professionalism—incompetence.

In January, 2001, just after Bush's inauguration, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office published its budget outlook for the coming decade. It showed a cumulative surplus of more than five trillion dollars. At the time, there was a lot of talk about what to do with the anticipated bounty, a discussion that now seems antique. Last year's federal deficit was three hundred and seventy-five billion dollars; this year's will top four hundred billion. According to the C.B.O., which came out with its latest projection in September, the period from 2005 to 2014 will see a cumulative shortfall of $2.3 trillion.

Even this seven-trillion-dollar turnaround underestimates the looming fiscal disaster. In doing its calculations, the C.B.O. assumed that most of the Bush tax cuts would expire in 2011, as specified in the legislation that enacted them. However, nobody in Washington expects them to go away on schedule; they were designated as temporary only to make their ultimate results look less scary. If Congress extends the expiration deadlines—a near-certainty if Bush wins and the Republicans retain control of Congress—then, according to the C.B.O., the cumulative deficit between 2005 and 2014 will nearly double, to $4.5 trillion.

What has the country received in return for mortgaging its future? The President says that his tax cuts lifted the economy before and after 9/11, thereby moderating the downturn that began with the Nasdaq's collapse in April, 2000. It's true that even badly designed tax cuts can give the economy a momentary jolt. But this doesn't make them wise policy. "Most of the tax cuts went to low- and middle-income Americans," Bush said during his final debate with Senator John Kerry. This is false—a lie, actually—though at least it suggests some dim awareness that the reverse Robin Hood approach to tax cuts is politically and morally repugnant. But for tax cuts to stimulate economic activity quickly and efficiently they should go to people who will spend the extra money. Largely at the insistence of Democrats and moderate Republicans, the Bush cuts gave middle-class families some relief in the form of refunds, bigger child credits, and a smaller marriage penalty. Still, the rich do better, to put it mildly. Citizens for Tax Justice, a Washington research group whose findings have proved highly dependable, notes that, this year, a typical person in the lowest fifth of the income distribution will get a tax cut of ninety-one dollars, a typical person in the middle fifth will pocket eight hundred and sixty-three dollars, and a typical person in the top one per cent will collect a windfall of fifty-nine thousand two hundred and ninety-two dollars.

These disparities help explain the familiar charge that Bush will likely be the first chief executive since Hoover to preside over a net loss of American jobs. This Administration's most unshakable commitment has been to shifting the burden of taxation away from the sort of income that rewards wealth and onto the sort that rewards work. The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, another Washington research group, estimates that the average federal tax rate on income generated from corporate dividends and capital gains is now about ten per cent. On wages and salaries it's about twenty-three per cent. The President promises, in a second term, to expand tax-free savings accounts, cut taxes further on dividends and capital gains, and permanently abolish the estate tax—all of which will widen the widening gap between the richest and the rest.



Bush signalled his approach toward the environment a few weeks into his term, when he reneged on a campaign pledge to regulate carbon-dioxide emissions, the primary cause of global warming. His record since then has been dictated, sometimes literally, by the industries affected. In 2002, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed rescinding a key provision of the Clean Air Act known as "new source review," which requires power-plant operators to install modern pollution controls when upgrading older facilities. The change, it turned out, had been recommended by some of the nation's largest polluters, in e-mails to the Energy Task Force, which was chaired by Vice-President Cheney. More recently, the Administration proposed new rules that would significantly weaken controls on mercury emissions from power plants. The E.P.A.'s regulation drafters had copied, in some instances verbatim, memos sent to it by a law firm representing the utility industry.

"I guess you'd say I'm a good steward of the land," Bush mused dreamily during debate No. 2. Or maybe you'd say nothing of the kind. The President has so far been unable to persuade the Senate to allow oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, but vast stretches of accessible wilderness have been opened up to development. By stripping away restrictions on the use of federal lands, often through little-advertised rule changes, the Administration has

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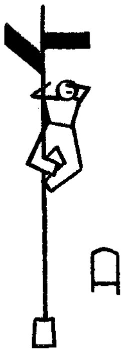
potentially opened up sixty million acres, an area larger than Indiana and Iowa combined, to logging, mining, and oil exploration.

During the fevered period immediately after September 11th, the Administration rushed what it was pleased to call the U.S.A. Patriot Act through a compliant Congress. Some of the reaction to that law has been excessive. Many of its provisions, such as allowing broader information-sharing among investigative agencies, are sensible. About others there are legitimate concerns. Section 215 of the law, for example, permits government investigators to obtain—without a subpoena or a search warrant based on probable cause—a court order entitling them to records from libraries, bookstores, doctors, universities, and Internet service providers, among other public and private entities. Officials of the Department of Justice say that they have used Section 215 with restraint, and that they have not, so far, sought information from libraries or bookstores. Their avowals of good faith would be more reassuring if their record were not otherwise so troubling.

Secrecy and arrogance have been the touchstones of the Justice Department under Bush and his attorney general, John Ashcroft. Seven weeks after the 9/11 attacks, the Administration announced that its investigation had resulted in nearly twelve hundred arrests. The arrests have continued, but eventually the Administration simply stopped saying how many people were and are being held. In any event, not one of the detainees has been convicted of anything resembling a terrorist act. At least as reprehensible is the way that foreign nationals living in the United States have been treated. Since September 11th, some five thousand have been rounded up and more than five hundred have been deported, all for immigration infractions, after hearings that, in line with a novel doctrine asserted by Ashcroft, were held in secret. Since it is official policy not to deport terrorism suspects, it is unclear what legitimate anti-terror purpose these secret hearings serve.

President Bush often complains about Democratic obstructionism, but the truth is that he has made considerable progress, if that's the right word, toward the goal of stocking the federal courts with conservative ideologues. The Senate has confirmed two hundred and one of his judicial nominees, more than the per-term averages for Presidents Clinton, Reagan, and Bush senior. Senate Republicans blocked more than sixty of Clinton's nominees; Senate Democrats have blocked only ten of Bush's. (Those ten, by the way, got exactly what they deserved. Some of them—such as Carolyn Kuhl, who devoted years of her career to trying to preserve tax breaks for colleges that practice racial discrimination, and Brett Kavanaugh, a thirty-eight-year-old with no judicial or courtroom experience who co-wrote the Starr Report—rank among the worst judicial appointments ever attempted.)



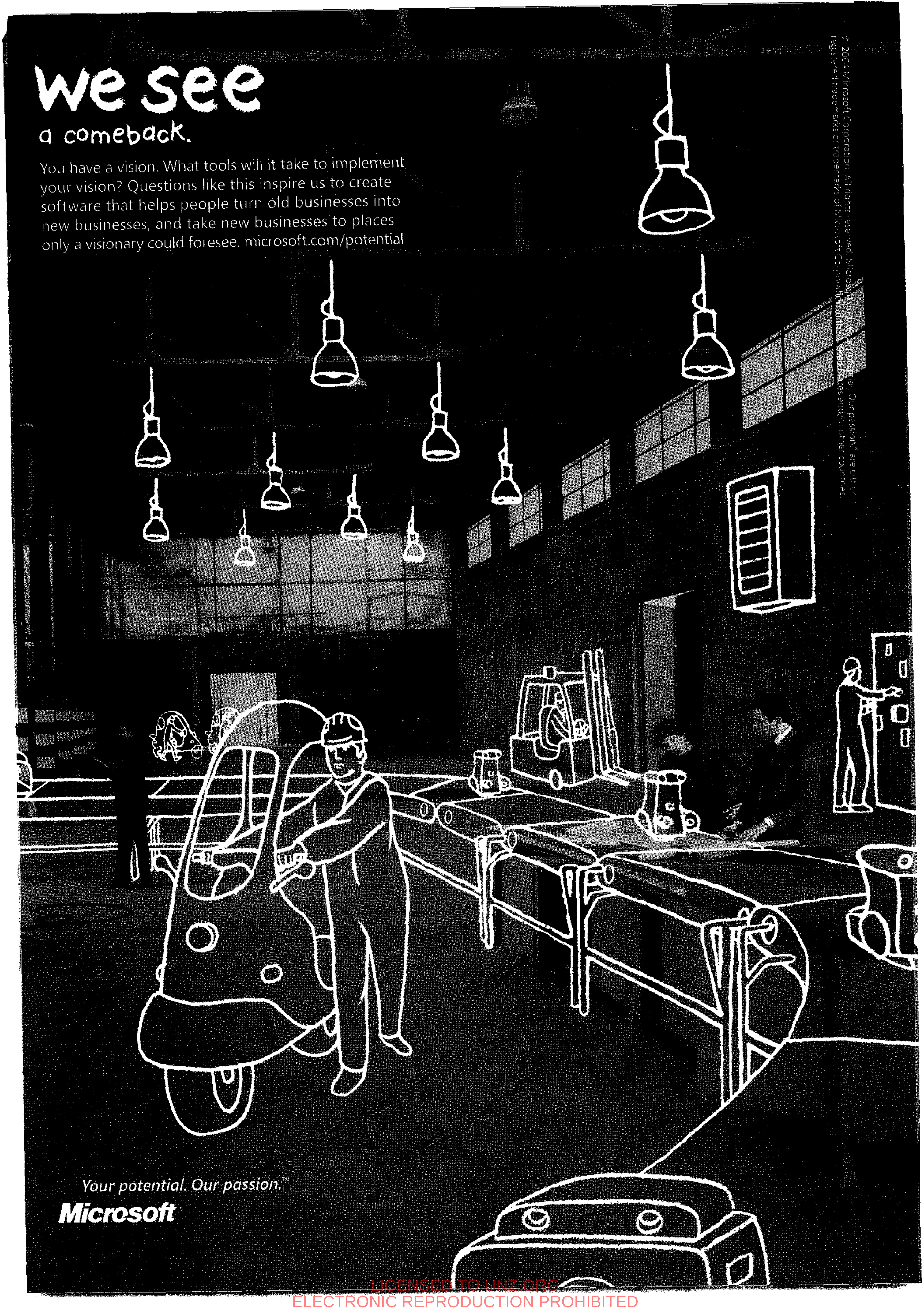
Even so, to the extent that Bush and Ashcroft have been thwarted it has been due largely to our still vigorous federal judiciary, especially the Supreme Court. Like some of the Court's worst decisions of the past four years (Bush v. Gore again comes to mind), most of its best—salvaging affirmative action, upholding civil liberties for terrorist suspects, striking down Texas's anti-sodomy law, banning executions of the mentally retarded—were reached by one- or two-vote majorities. (Roe v. Wade is two justices removed from reversal.) All but one of the sitting justices are senior citizens, ranging in age from sixty-five to eighty-four, and the gap since the last appointment—ten years—is the longest since 1821. Bush has said more than once that Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas are his favorite justices. In a second Bush term, the Court could be remade in their images.

The record is similarly dismal in other areas of domestic policy. An executive order giving former Presidents the power to keep their papers indefinitely sealed is one example among many of a mania for secrecy that long antedates 9/11. The President's hostility to science, exemplified by his decision to place crippling limits on federal support of stem-cell research and by a systematic willingness to distort or suppress scientific findings discomfiting to "the base," is such that scores of eminent scientists who are normally indifferent to politics have called for his defeat. The Administration's energy policies, especially its resistance to increasing fuel-efficiency requirements, are of a piece with its environmental irresponsibility. Even the highly touted No Child Left Behind education program, enacted with the support of the liberal lion Edward Kennedy, is being allowed to fail, on account of grossly inadequate funding. Some of the money that has been pumped into it has been leached from other education programs, dozens of which are slated for cuts next year.

Ordinarily, such a record would be what lawyers call dispositive. But this election is anything but ordinary. Jobs, health care, education, and the rest may not count for much when weighed against the prospect of large-scale terrorist attack. The most important Presidential responsibility of the next four years, as of the past three, is the "war on terror"—more precisely, the struggle against a brand of Islamist fundamentalist totalitarianism that uses particularly ruthless forms of terrorism as its main weapon.

Bush's immediate reaction to the events of September 11, 2001, was an almost palpable bewilderment and anxiety. Within a few days, to the universal relief of his fellow-citizens, he seemed to find his focus. His decision to use American military power to topple the Taliban rulers of Afghanistan, who had turned their country into the principal base of operations for the perpetrators of the attacks, earned the near-unanimous support of the American people and of America's allies. Troops from Britain, France, Germany, Canada, Italy, Norway, and Spain are serving alongside Americans in Afghanistan to this day.

The determination of ordinary Afghans to vote in last month's Presidential election, for which the votes are still being counted, is clearly a positive sign. Yet the job in Afghanistan has been left undone, despite fervent promises at the outset that the chaos that was allowed to develop after the defeat of the Soviet occupation in the nineteen-eighties would not be repeated. The Taliban has regrouped in eastern and southern re-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gions. Bin Laden's organization continues to enjoy sanctuary and support from Afghans as well as Pakistanis on both sides of their common border. Warlords control much of Afghanistan outside the capital of Kabul, which is the extent of the territorial writ of the decent but beleaguered President Hamid Karzai. Opium production has increased fortyfold.

The White House's real priorities were elsewhere from the start. According to the former counter-terrorism adviser Richard Clarke, in a Situation Room crisis meeting on September 12, 2001, Donald Rumsfeld suggested launching retaliatory strikes against Iraq. When Clarke and others pointed out to him that Al Qaeda—the presumed culprit—was based in Afghanistan, not Iraq, Rumsfeld is said to have remarked that there were better targets in Iraq. The bottom line, as Bush's former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill has said, was that the Bush-Cheney team had been planning to carry out regime change in Baghdad well before September 11th—one way or another, come what may.

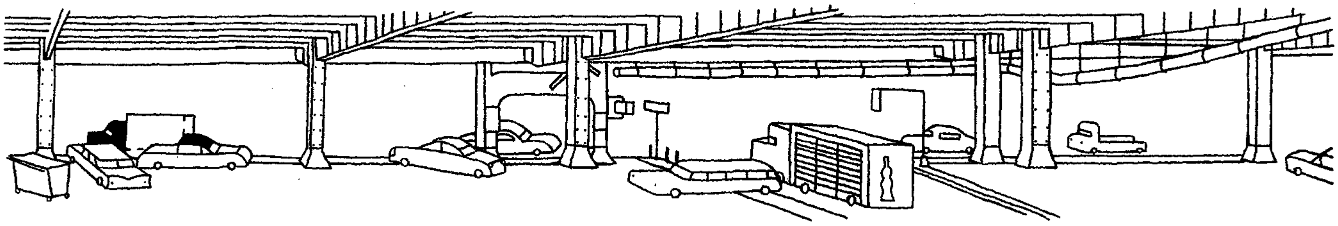
At all three debates, President Bush defended the Iraq war by saying that without it Saddam Hussein would still be in power. This is probably true, and Saddam's record of colossal cruelty—of murder, oppression, and regional aggression—was such that even those who doubted the war's wisdom acknowledged his fall as an occasion for satisfaction. But the removal of Saddam has not been the war's only consequence; and, as we now know, his power, however fearsome to the millions directly under its sway, was far less of a threat to the United States and the rest of the world than it pretended—and, more important, was made out—to be.

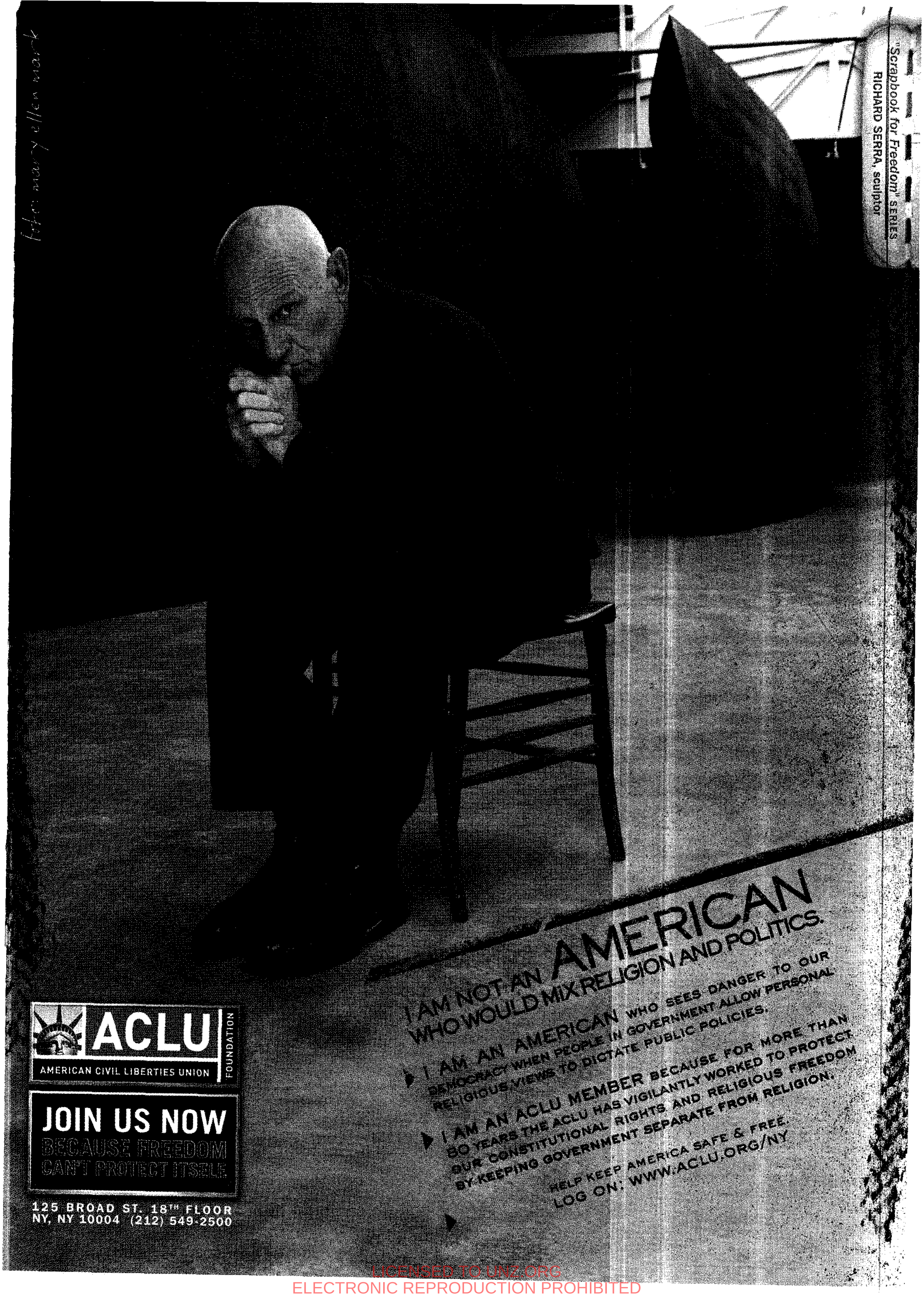
As a variety of memoirs and journalistic accounts have made plain, Bush seldom entertains contrary opinion. He boasts that he listens to no outside advisers, and inside advisers who dare to express unwelcome views are met with anger or disdain. He lives and works within a self-created bubble of faith-based affirmation. Nowhere has his solipsism been more damaging than in the case of Iraq. The arguments and warnings of analysts in the State Department, in the Central Intelligence Agency, in the uniformed military services, and in the chanceries of sympathetic foreign governments had no more effect than the chants of millions of marchers.

The decision to invade and occupy Iraq was made on the basis of four assumptions: first, that Saddam's regime was on the verge of acquiring nuclear explosives and had already amassed stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons; second, that the regime had meaningful links with Al Qaeda and (as was repeatedly suggested by the Vice-President and others) might have had something to do with 9/11; third, that within Iraq the regime's fall would be followed by prolonged celebration and rapid and peaceful democratization; and, fourth, that a similar democratic transformation would be precipitated elsewhere in the region, accompanied by a new eagerness among Arab governments and publics to make peace between Israel and a presumptive Palestinian state. The first two of these assumptions have been shown to be entirely baseless. As for the second two, if the wishes behind them do someday come true, it may not be clear that the invasion of Iraq was a help rather than a hindrance.

In Bush's rhetoric, the Iraq war began on March 20, 2003, with precision bombings of government buildings in Baghdad, and ended exactly three weeks later, with the iconic statue pulldown. That military operation was indeed a success. But the cakewalk led over a cliff, to a succession of heedless and disastrous mistakes that leave one wondering, at the very least, how the Pentagon's civilian leadership remains intact and the President's sense of infallibility undisturbed. The failure, against the advice of such leaders as General Eric Shinseki, then the Army chief of staff, to deploy an adequate protective force led to unchallenged looting of government buildings, hospitals, museums, and—most inexcusable of all—arms depots. ("Stuff happens," Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld explained, though no stuff happened to the oil ministry.) The Pentagon all but ignored the State Department's postwar plans, compiled by its Future of Iraq project, which warned not only of looting but also of the potential for insurgencies and the folly of relying on exiles such as Ahmad Chalabi; the project's head, Thomas Warrick, was sidelined. The White House counsel's disparagement of the Geneva Conventions and of prohibitions on torture as "quaint" opened the way to systematic and spectacular abuses at Abu Ghraib and other American-run prisons—a moral and political catastrophe for which, in a pattern characteristic of the Administration's management style, no one in a policymaking position has been held accountable. And, no matter how Bush may cleave to his arguments about a grand coalition ("What's he say to Tony Blair?" "He forgot Poland!"), the coalition he assembled was anything but grand, and it has been steadily melting away in Iraq's cauldron of violence.

By the end of the current fiscal year, the financial cost of this war will be two hundred billion dollars (the figure projected by Lawrence Lindsey, who headed the President's Council of Economic Advisers until, like numerous other bearers of unpalatable news, he was cashiered) and rising. And there are other, more serious costs that were unforeseen by the dominant factions in the Administration (although there were plenty of people who did foresee them). The United States has become mired in a low-intensity guerrilla war that has taken more lives since the mission was declared to be accomplished than before. American military deaths have mounted to more than a thousand, a number





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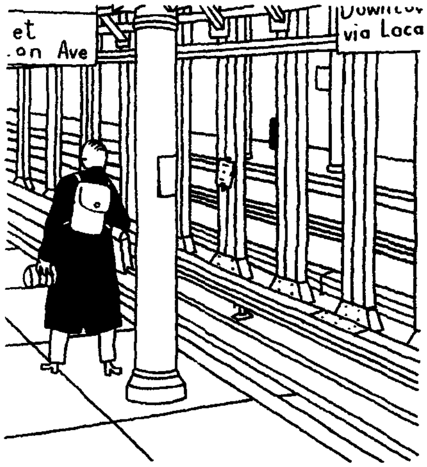
that underplays the real level of suffering: among the eight thousand wounded are many who have been left seriously maimed. The toll of Iraqi dead and wounded is of an order of magnitude greater than the American. Al Qaeda, previously an insignificant presence in Iraq, is an important one now. Before this war, we had persuaded ourselves and the world that our military might was effectively infinite. Now it is overstretched, a reality obvious to all. And, if the exposure of American weakness encourages our enemies, surely the blame lies with those who created the reality, not with those who, like Senator Kerry, acknowledge it as a necessary step toward changing it.

When the Administration's geopolitical, national-interest, and anti-terrorism justifications for the Iraq war collapsed, it groped for an argument from altruism: postwar chaos, violence, unemployment, and brownouts notwithstanding, the war has purchased freedoms for the people of Iraq which they could not have had without Saddam's fall. That is true. But a sad and ironic consequence of this war is that its fumbling prosecution has undermined its only even arguably meritorious rationale—and, as a further consequence, the salience of idealism in American foreign policy has been likewise undermined. Foreign-policy idealism has taken many forms—Wilson's aborted world federalism, Carter's human-rights jawboning, and Reagan's flirtation with total nuclear disarmament, among others. The failed armed intervention in Somalia and the successful ones in the Balkans are other examples. The neoconservative version ascendant in the Bush Administration, post-9/11, draws partly on these strains. There is surely idealistic purpose in envisioning a Middle East finally relieved of its autocracies and dictatorships. Yet this Administration's adventure in Iraq is so gravely flawed and its credibility so badly damaged that in the future, faced with yet another moral dilemma abroad, it can be expected to retreat, a victim of its own Iraq Syndrome.

The damage visited upon America, and upon America's standing in the world, by the Bush Administration's reckless mishandling of the public trust will not easily be undone. And for many voters the desire to see the damage arrested is reason enough to vote for John Kerry. But the challenger has more to offer than the fact that he is not George W. Bush. In every crucial area of concern to Americans (the economy, health care, the environment, Social Security, the judiciary, national security, foreign policy, the war in Iraq, the fight against terrorism), Kerry offers a clear, corrective alternative to Bush's curious blend of smugness, radicalism, and demagoguery. Pollsters like to ask voters which candidate they'd most like to have a beer with, and on that metric Bush always wins. We prefer to ask which candidate is better suited to the governance of our nation.



Throughout his long career in public service, John Kerry has demonstrated steadiness and sturdiness of character. The physical courage he showed in combat in Vietnam was matched by moral courage when he raised his voice against the war, a choice that has carried political costs from his first run for Congress, lost in 1972 to a campaign of character assassination from a local newspaper that could not forgive his antiwar stand, right through this year's Swift Boat ads. As a senator, Kerry helped expose the mischief of the Bank of Commerce and Credit International, a money-laundering operation that favored terrorists and criminal cartels; when his investigation forced him to confront corruption among fellow-Democrats, he rejected the cronyism of colleagues and brought down power brokers of his own party with the same dedication that he showed in going after Oliver North in the Iran-Contra scandal. His leadership, with John McCain, of the bipartisan effort to put to rest the toxic debate over Vietnam-era P.O.W.s and M.I.A.s and to lay the diplomatic groundwork for Washington's normalization of relations with Hanoi, in the mid-nineties, was the signal accomplishment of his twenty years on Capitol Hill, and it is emblematic of his fairness of mind and independence of spirit. Kerry has made mistakes (most notably, in hindsight at least, his initial opposition to the Gulf War in 1990), but—in contrast to the President, who touts his imperviousness to changing realities as a virtue—he has learned from them.

Kerry's performance on the stump has been uneven, and his public groping for a firm explanation of his position on Iraq was discouraging to behold. He can be cautious to a fault, overeager to acknowledge every angle of an issue; and his reluctance to expose the Administration's appalling record bluntly and relentlessly until very late in the race was a missed opportunity. But when his foes sought to destroy him rather than to debate him they found no scandals and no evidence of bad faith in his past. In the face of infuriating and scurrilous calumnies, he kept the sort of cool that the thin-skinned and painfully insecure incumbent cannot even feign during the unprogrammed give-and-take of an electoral debate. Kerry's mettle has been tested under fire—the fire of real bullets and the political fire that will surely not abate but, rather, intensify if he is elected—and he has shown himself to be tough, resilient, and possessed of a properly Presidential dose of dignified authority. While Bush has pandered relentlessly to the narrowest urges of his base, Kerry has sought to appeal broadly to the American center. In a time of primitive partisanship, he has exhibited a fundamentally undogmatic temperament. In campaigning for America's mainstream restoration, Kerry has insisted that this election ought to be decided on the urgent issues of our moment, the issues that will define American life for the coming half century. That insistence is a measure of his character. He is plainly the better choice. As observers, reporters, and commentators we will hold him to the highest standards of honesty and performance. For now, as citizens, we hope for his victory.

—*The Editors*

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE BELIEVER

Paul Wolfowitz defends his war.

BY PETER J. BOYER

On the night of October 5th, a group of Polish students, professors, military officers, and state officials crowded into a small auditorium at Warsaw University to hear Paul Wolfowitz, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, give a talk on the subject of the war in Iraq. It was an unusually warm evening for October, and every seat was filled; the room seemed nearly airless. Wolfowitz began by joking that his father, a noted mathematician, would have been proud to see him in this academic setting, even as he was saddened that the younger Wolfowitz had pursued the political, rather than the "real," sciences. After a few minutes, Wolfowitz's voice, which normally has a soft tremble, grew even more faint, and his aspect became wan. For an instant, he seemed actually to wobble.

"I'm sure we're going to win," Wolfowitz told a wounded soldier.

TOM BACHTELL

It had been a tiring day, preceded by an overnight flight from Washington. This was to have been a routine official trip for Wolfowitz—a visit with soldiers in Germany and some bucking up of Iraq-war allies in Warsaw and London. The bucking up, however, was made a bit more complicated by developments within the Administration. The previous afternoon, as Wolfowitz was preparing to board his plane at Andrews Air Force Base, an aide had handed him a report containing some vexing news. Wolfowitz's boss, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, had just delivered a speech in New York and, in a question-and-answer exchange afterward, had declared that he had not seen any "strong, hard evidence" linking Al Qaeda with Saddam Hussein's regime. Rumsfeld's unexpected remark—undercutting one of the Administration's principal arguments for going to war—had already prompted press inquiries at the Pentagon, suggesting a bad news cycle ahead. Meanwhile, the Washington *Post* was preparing to report that L. Paul Bremer, the former administrator of the American-led occupation of Iraq, had faulted the U.S. postwar plan for lacking sufficient troops to provide security—affirming a principal contention of the Administration's critics. In addition, the government's Iraq Survey Group, headed by Charles Duelfer, was about to release a final report on the search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq; already the report's substance was being summed up in headlines as "REPORT DISCOUNTS IRAQI ARMS THREAT." And the *Times* had learned of a new C.I.A. assessment casting doubt on links between the Jordanian terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and Saddam's regime—undermining yet another of the Administration's rationales for the war.

Wolfowitz has been a major architect of President Bush's Iraq policy and, within the Administration, its most passionate and compelling advocate. His long career as a diplomat, strategist, and policymaker will be measured by this policy, and, more immediately, the President he serves may not be returned to office because of it. The Administration had been divided over Iraq from the start, and new fissures seemed to be appearing. The Poles sitting in the Warsaw audience, "new" Europeans who had cast their lot with America, might understandably have been concerned. The government in Poland, where public opinion has shifted against the war, faces elections next year, and will probably reduce its forces in Iraq in the coming months.

After his faltering start, Wolfowitz, nearing the midpoint of his speech, began to find his voice. He recounted the events of Poland's darkest days, and the civilized world's acquiescence to Hitler's ambitions which preceded them. When Hitler began to rearm Germany, Wolfowitz said, "the world's hollow warnings formed weak defenses." When Hitler annexed Austria, "the world sat by." When German troops marched into Czechoslovakia before the war, "the world sat still once again." When Britain and France warned Hitler to stay out of Poland, the Führer had little reason to pay heed.

"Poles understand perhaps better than anyone the consequences of making toothless warnings to brutal tyrants and terrorist regimes," Wolfowitz said. "And, yes, I do include Saddam Hussein." He then laid out the case against Saddam, reciting once again the dicta-

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tor's numberless crimes against his own people. He spoke of severed hands and videotaped torture sessions. He told of the time, on a trip to Iraq, he'd been shown a "torture tree," the bark of which had been worn away by ropes used to bind Saddam's victims, both men and women. He said that field commanders recently told him that workers had come across a new mass grave, and had stopped excavation when they encountered the remains of several dozen women and children, "some still with little dresses and toys."

Wolfowitz observed that some people—meaning the "realists" in the foreign-policy community, including Secretary of State Colin Powell—believed that the Cold War balance of power had brought a measure of stability to the Persian Gulf. But, Wolfowitz continued, "Poland had a phrase that correctly characterized that as 'the stability of the graveyard.' The so-called stability that Saddam Hussein provided was something even worse."

Finally, Wolfowitz thanked the Poles for joining in a war that much of Europe had repudiated, and continues to oppose. His message was clear: history, especially Europe's in the last century, has proved that it is smarter to side with the U.S. than against it. "We will not forget Poland's commitment," he promised. "Just as you have stood with us, we will stand with you."

Wolfowitz, who is sixty, has served in the Administrations of six Presidents, yet he is still regarded by many in Washington with a considerable measure of puzzlement. This is due partly to the fact that, although his intelligence is conceded by all, and his quiet bearing and manner suggest the academic that he used to be—at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies—he has consistently argued positions that place him squarely in the category of war hawk. He began his life in public policy by marshalling arguments, in 1969, on behalf of a U.S. anti-ballistic-missile defense system. Like his mentor at the University of Chicago, the late political strategist Albert Wohlstetter, Wolfowitz was skeptical of a U.S.-Soviet convergence, embraced a national missile-defense system, and argued for the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe.

But most puzzling to some, perhaps, is the communion that Wolfowitz seems to have with George W. Bush. How can someone so smart, so knowing, speak—and even apparently think—so much like George Bush? Except for their manner of delivery—Wolfowitz speaks in coherent paragraphs and Bush employs an idiom that is particular to himself—the language used by the two men when discussing Iraq is almost indistinguishable. It is the stark tone of evangelical conviction: evil versus good, the "worship of death" and "philosophy of despair" versus our "love of life and democracy." Alongside Bush himself, Wolfowitz is, even now, among the last of the true believers.

Earlier on the day of his speech, Wolfowitz had toured the old city of Warsaw. In ceremonies attended by a Polish military honor guard, he laid wreaths at a memorial commemorating the Warsaw uprising and the monument to the Warsaw ghetto heroes. He laid a wreath, too, at the Umschlagplatz Memorial—the point of departure for some three hundred thousand Warsaw Jews who were transported to the Nazi death camp at Treblinka. Wolfowitz had pillaged the Pentagon library for a copy of "Courier from Warsaw," the memoir of Jan Nowak, a Catholic who was among the first Warsaw-uprising witnesses to reach the West and testify to the Nazi horrors. In Warsaw, Wolfowitz asked to meet with Nowak, who is ninety. They spoke about the scale of the Holocaust, and about "how terrible it was for the Poles during the sixty-three days of the uprising. Three thousand Poles were killed every day—a World Trade Center every day."

Wolfowitz told me that he had never before visited the memorials, and that, other than a quick stopover, this was his first trip to Poland, even though his father, Jacob Wolfowitz, had been born in Warsaw. He managed to emigrate during Poland's brief interwar independence, unlike many other family members, who did not survive the Ho-

MOTES

A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.
—"*Hamlet.*"

They wandered out of gloom
Into some golden shaft
Of late-afternoon light,
Those tiny filaments
That filled me with delight,
Lifted by an updraft
Or viewless influence
There in the living room.

They might be minuscule
Angels, it seemed to me,
Needing no wings to rise
Or slide back out of sight
But floating effortlessly
Through our interior skies,
Each incandescent mite
A pilot at flight school.

Their rises, their declines,
Resembled Jacob's dream
And seemed an allegory
Enacted just for me

There in my own sunbeam
But swathed in mystery—
Some esoteric story
Wrought in encoded signs:

One more of the shrewd, well-tried
Ways that a child is kept
From some shrouded, grownup truth,
Probably linked with tears;
For the one thing clear to youth
Is that no joy goes unwept,
And that their utmost fears
Will be amply justified;

Which makes them minor sages,
Without the words for what
They cannot yet know or say:
That whatever lies in store,
They were typecast in some play
With a far from comic plot—
Grief, selfishness, and war
Crowding its dog-eared pages.

—*Anthony Hecht*
(1923-2004)

locaust. It is probable that some of Wolfowitz's relatives made their way through the Umschlagplatz, although not much is known. Wolfowitz said that he had learned little about Warsaw life, or the fate of his lost relatives, from his father. "He hated to talk about his childhood," Wolfowitz said. As a boy, Wolfowitz devoured books ("probably too many") about the Holocaust and Hiroshima—what he calls "the polar horrors."

After his meeting with Jan Nowak, Wolfowitz's conversation in the following days kept returning to what he had heard. "He told about how the ghetto was walled off from the rest of the city, but there was one streetcar that had to cross it," Wolfowitz said. "And every day he would see bodies laid out, covered with newspaper, because that was all they had to cover them with, and people who'd starved to death and died of typhoid." Nowak told Wolfowitz that in secret wartime meetings with Britain's top officials, including Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, he had reported the plight of the Warsaw Jews; yet, when he later examined the minutes from these meetings in the British archives, he found no mention of the Jews. "Nowak said it was wartime inconvenience." Wolfowitz paused, then added, "There are some parallels to Iraq. One is that people don't believe these things. First, they don't know it, because the world doesn't talk about them. It may be for different reasons, although some of it is 'wartime inconvenience.' "

Wolfowitz said that he was astonished by the argument of some war critics that, with no imminent threat from Iraq, the overturning of Saddam was unwarranted—an argument that he believes implicitly accepts Saddam's brutality. A corollary phenomenon is the relative lack of opprobrium directed by the international community and the press toward the insurgents in Iraq, whom the Administration brands as terrorists. "It's amazing," he said. "If you said the insurgents were terrible, then you couldn't go on and on about all the mistakes that Bush has made."

Perhaps, but the other side of that coin is the Administration's shift in rhetorical emphasis after Baghdad was taken. Given the lack of weapons of mass destruction or proven ties between Iraq and the terror attacks of September 11th, the liberation rationale acquired a primary importance that it had not had in the Administration's public argument for war.

In turn, the developing insurgency, which eclipsed the parades and the cheering throngs, prompted renewed focus on the Administration's geopolitical strategy—the transformation of the region—as a war rationale. This grand idea of liberalizing the Middle East one country at a time, beginning with Iraq, was associated particularly with Wolfowitz. The State Department was, and is, skeptical, and it is said that Rumsfeld harbored doubts as well.

Wolfowitz's critics accuse him of naïveté, of setting out a vision that fails to consider fully the complex and unpredictable regional dynamics of tribal loyalties, honor, revenge, and Arab pride in Iraq and in the region generally. They argue that the invasion and the subsequent insurgency have undermined American authority throughout the world and have led to more, not fewer, jihad-minded terrorists. Wolfowitz often responds to critics by drawing an analogy to Asia, where skeptics once argued that Confucian tradition was a barrier to the development of democracy. He has said, "This is the same Confucian tradition that more recently has been given a substantial share of the credit for the success of the Korean economy and many others in Asia."

En route to Poland, Wolfowitz made a brief stop in Munich, where he met with two men who had helped to shape his view of Islam. One was Anwar Ibrahim, the former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, who was in Germany for medical treatment. Ibrahim had been a nineteen-seventies-era student activist who entered politics and became, in the eyes of Wolfowitz and other Westerners, the embodiment of the moderate Muslim ideal—at once devoutly religious and tolerant, and eager to move his country into the modern world. He was widely expected to succeed his mentor, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, but in 1998 Mohamad had Ibrahim arrested, on charges of corruption and sodomy (a

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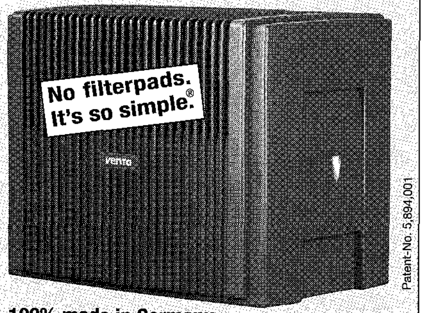

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crime in Malaysia), and he was sentenced to a nine-year jail term. Three years later, just after the September 11th attacks, Ibrahim, still in a Malaysian jail, wrote an impassioned essay condemning the attacks as an abomination and lamenting the Muslim world's failure to address "the suffering inflicted on the Muslim masses in Iraq by its dictator as well as by sanctions." He was freed in September.

Wolfowitz also met with Abdurrahman Wahid, the former President of Indonesia. Toward the end of the second Reagan Administration, Wolfowitz, who was then Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia, was offered the Ambassadorship to Indonesia. Wolfowitz had spent more than a dozen years in the policy grind of Washington, and he and his wife, Clare, were eager to get away. Clare Wolfowitz had a particular interest in Indonesia—she'd been an exchange student there in high school, spoke the language, and had made Indonesia her academic specialty; she holds a Ph.D. in social anthropology. (The couple are now separated.) People who have spent much time with Wolfowitz eventually notice that Indonesia is the one subject guaranteed to brighten his mood. "I really didn't expect to fall in love with this place, but I did," he told me earlier this year. "I mean, I don't think I made the mistake of forgetting which country I represented, or overlooking their flaws, but there was so much that was just enormously appealing to me."

Wolfowitz's appointment to Indonesia was not an immediately obvious match. He was a Jew representing America in the largest Muslim republic in the world, an advocate of democracy in Suharto's dictatorship. But Wolfowitz's tenure as Ambassador was a notable success, largely owing to the fact that, in essence, he went native. With tutoring help from his driver, he learned the language, and hurled himself into the culture. He attended academic seminars, climbed volcanoes, and toured the neighborhoods of Jakarta.

At the time, Wahid was the leader of Indonesia's largest Muslim group, which eventually morphed into a political party and brought Wahid to the Presidency, the nation's first in a free election. (Not long after, however, he was impeached by the Indonesian parliament.) Wolfowitz found Wahid to be urbane, witty (his translation of a book of Soviet black humor became a best-seller in the Suharto era), and broad-minded. Islam arrived late in Indonesia, and is less deeply rooted there than it is in many Arab states. The constitution protects other religious faiths, and Wahid, who is deeply devout, took that tolerance a step further, advocating total separation of mosque and state. "He's a remarkable human being," Wolfowitz said. "I mean, there's the leader of the largest Muslim organization, and he's an apostle of tolerance. How can you not admire him?"

Wolfowitz and Wahid became lasting friends, and, inevitably, one of their shared interests was the subject of Iraq. Wolfowitz told me that Wahid had studied in Baghdad, and that he was an early witness to the Baath Party's atrocities. Wahid had described how Saddam's regime "left the bodies hanging so long, the necks stretched," Wolfowitz said. "It was in the main square in Baghdad, to send a message, to say, 'This is who you're dealing with from now on.' And he said his teacher was taken away, the body was brought back in a sealed coffin, and they were told not to open it. They went ahead and opened it, and they found he'd been horribly tortured."

At the reunion in Munich, Wahid, who is nearly blind and has been enfeebled by strokes, made his way slowly down a hotel corridor and embraced his old friend. Wahid is an acquaintance of the Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, Iraq's most influential Shiite cleric, upon whom the future direction of Iraq may largely depend. Sistani, who does not openly engage with Americans, is believed to oppose the creation of an Iranian-style theocracy in Iraq, and his influence has been instrumental in reining in the radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr. Wahid indicated that he might visit Iraq soon, and, as a Sunni who knows Sistani, he'd like to help improve relations between Sunnis and Shiites.

Another influence on Wolfowitz's thinking is an Arab feminist named Shaha Ali Riza, with whom he has become close. Riza, who was born in Tunisia and reared in Saudi Arabia, studied international relations at Oxford and subsequently became a determined advocate of democracy and women's rights in the Islamic world. She is now a senior official at the World Bank, where she works on Middle Eastern and North African affairs.

Wolfowitz says that his hopes for a democratic Iraq now are modest. He claims that he never expected a Jeffersonian democracy, as some of his critics have derisively asserted. What he wishes to see is something stable, and more liberal than what came before. "It is something of a test," he told me one day this summer, regarding the Iraqis. "We can't be sure they'll pass. And they're not going to pass with an A-plus. I mean, if they do Romanian democracy and the country doesn't break up that'll be pretty good."

The morning after his speech at Warsaw University, Wolfowitz flew to London, for meetings at 10 Downing Street and at the Ministry of Defence. That evening, he hosted a gathering of British writers at Annabel's, in Mayfair, and their questions quickly turned to the subject of Rumsfeld's remark earlier in the week that he'd seen no hard evidence of an Al Qaeda-Iraqi connection. This had prompted hurried defensive strategizing at the Pentagon, and Rumsfeld put out a clarification of his statement. Still, the issue lingered. The C.I.A.'s latest assessment, based on information gathered since the end of major combat, cast further doubt on the connection, and was now in circulation.

Wolfowitz often prefaces his response to questions about this issue, as he did at Annabel's and at the Aspen Institute earlier this year, by posing a question of his own. It's a sort of parlor game that he plays. He asks, in a professorial whisper, "How many people here have heard of Abdul Rahman Yassin, if you'd raise your hand?" In a room of two dozen people, no more than two or three will raise their hands.

Wolfowitz notes the meagre tally, allows himself a slight smile, and then explains that Abdul Rahman Yassin was one of the men indicted for the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, which killed six people and injured a thousand others. He remains a fugitive, the only one of the indicted perpetrators of that attack still at large.

Then Wolfowitz turns to the September 11th attacks. They were planned, he reminds his audience, by Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. The mastermind of the first World Trade Center bombing, Ramzi Yousef, was a nephew and close associate of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. "These are not separate events. They were the same target. They were the same people." And Abdul Rahman Yassin, the fugitive from the first event? He fled to Iraq. "It would seem significant that one major figure in that event is still at large," Wolfowitz says. "It would seem significant that he was harbored in Iraq by Iraqi intelligence for ten years."

Many intelligence analysts believe that the presence of Yassin in Iraq was not particularly meaningful. Not long after his arrival there, Yassin, who grew up in Baghdad, was detained by the Saddam regime, and in 2002 he was even interviewed by "60 Minutes" in an Iraqi holding cell; if he was being "harbored," the argument goes, it was only as a detainee that Saddam hoped to use as a bargaining chip with the United States. Furthermore, during the run-up to the war the Administration didn't make Yassin a major issue.

Neither Wolfowitz nor the other intelligence analysts can say unequivocally what Yassin was doing in Iraq. Wolfowitz's purpose in raising the issue is to illustrate the uncertain nature of intelligence analysis. He believes that there is important unexamined evidence regarding Yassin, yet, he says, when he broaches the matter with members of Congress his arguments are often met with resistance. "Every time you try to raise it, people say, 'But there's no proof Saddam was involved in 9/11.' "

The issue illustrates Wolfowitz's own deep and abiding suspicions about the inviolability of the intelligence community's culture and processes, a skepticism that dates back to his earliest days in government service. In 1973, Wolfowitz

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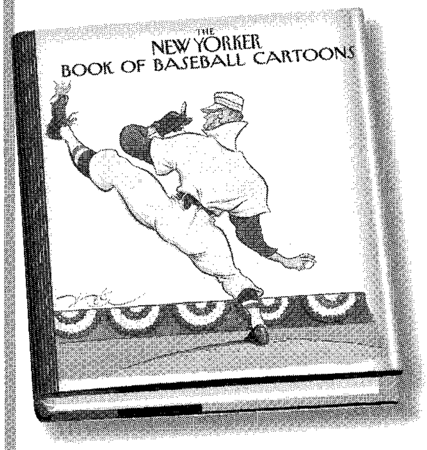

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"By the way, does anything other than 'trouble' rhyme with 'bubble'?"

was a young new hire at the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, his first foray into the national-security side of government. It was the era of the SALT talks with the Soviets, and one of the first reports that Wolfowitz saw was the "big prize" itself—the National Intelligence Estimate of Soviet capabilities. Wolfowitz read the estimate, but he was struck, he says, more by a cover letter that accompanied it. The letter said that it was a credit to the report that, on such an important subject, it contained hardly any footnotes. In that world, footnotes were the means by which differing opinions were indicated. Wolfowitz was amazed, and appalled, that the C.I.A. boasted about not presenting dissenting views.

Some years ago, after Wolfowitz had left Washington for Jakarta, he consented to an interview with the C.I.A., which was reassessing its analysis processes. "The idea that somehow you are saving work for the policymaker by eliminating serious debate is wrong," Wolfowitz told his interviewer. "Why not aim, instead, at a document that actually says there are two strongly argued positions on the issue? Here are the facts and evidence supporting one position, and here are the facts and evidence supporting the other, even though that might leave the poor policymakers to make a judgment as to which one they think is correct."

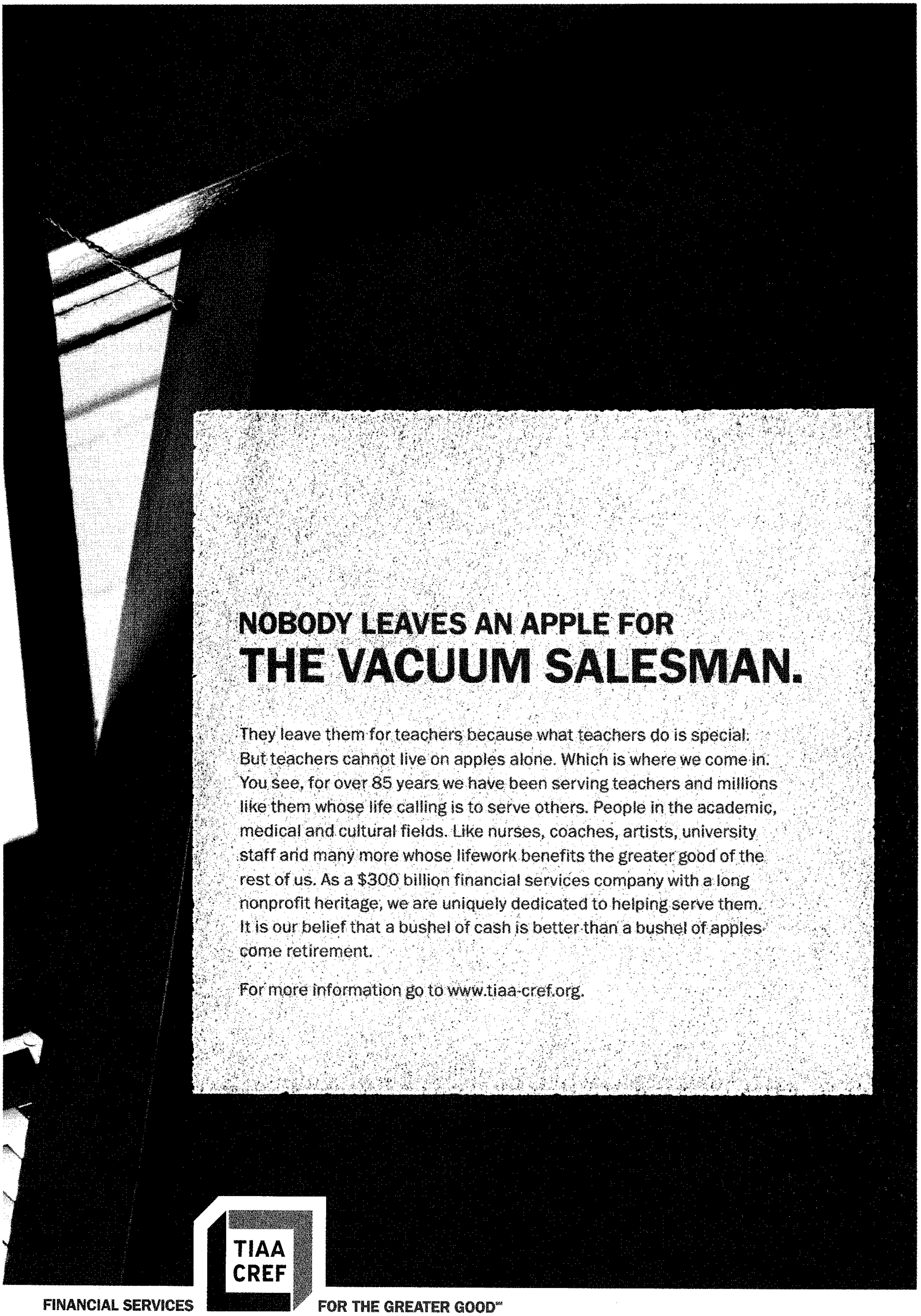
Wolfowitz wanted to reëxamine national-security intelligence, and to avoid what he considered the groupthink inclinations of the intelligence professionals ("the priesthood," he calls them). Eventually, he came to be known for his ability to recognize threatening patterns and capabilities that others had been unable to see. When the common wisdom held that the Soviets would slow the development and deployment of their intermediate-range missiles, Wolfowitz predicted, correctly, that the Soviets meant to modernize and enhance them. When the conventional view held that Saddam Hussein would not invade another Arab nation, Wolfowitz said that we shouldn't rule out the possibility that he might cross the border into Kuwait—and a decade later Saddam did just that.

In 2001, the Defense Department set up a small in-house operation called the Counter Terrorism Evaluation Group, whose purpose, according to its creators, was not, as its critics have charged, to cherry-pick raw intelligence in order to justify the invasion of Iraq but to connect the dots between terrorist groups and countries that harbored them. Wolfowitz had his aides run a software program called Analyst Notebook, which, like a wiring diagram, could show links between disparate pieces of information. As a result, all manner of putative links were made, in much the same way that Wolfowitz connects the dots in his little parlor game. This is one way in which the connection between terrorism and Iraq became a fixed idea.

After the session at Annabel's, Wolfowitz flew back to Germany. The next morning, he began the day by visiting Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, near Ramstein Air Base, which serves as the American military's hub hospital for an area stretching from Europe to Southwest Asia. As Wolfowitz walked down the facility's long corridors, he was accompanied by its commander, Colonel Rhonda Cornum. She is a physician, and a pilot—in the Gulf War, she was captured and briefly held by the Iraqis—and she had an agenda. The hospital was running at a high capacity, with some sections—orthopedics, the psych ward—completely full. Since the start of the global war on terror, nineteen thousand people had been admitted, many of them within twelve hours of being wounded in Iraq. But because the Administration continues to categorize the war as a "contingency" operation, she said, she was not able to add permanent staff. This meant having temporary medical staff who were rotated in and out of the facility from other military hospitals around the world, and it added stress to an inherently stressful operation. Wolfowitz accepted her neatly prepared PowerPoint report, and handed it to an aide.

Then he stepped into the room of a young sergeant named Jeron Johnson, from Bowman, South Carolina. Johnson was connected to several I.V.s and monitors, but he was awake, and alert. Wolfowitz walked to his bedside, leaned in, and asked, "What happened?" In a quiet, raspy voice, Johnson, who had just reënlisted before being wounded, told him that he had been on a mission with his unit in Baghdad, when his convoy got hit. "It was a V.B.I.E.D.," Johnson explained. An I.E.D., or improvised explosive device, is the military's term for a roadside bomb, a favored weapon of the insurgents. Car bombs are called vehicle-borne I.E.D.s.

"I saw this big burst," Johnson calmly recounted. "I said, O.K., I got hit. . . . I called the guys over—I said, 'My leg's



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broke.' " Johnson suffered two broken legs, and several lesser injuries.

Another soldier entered the room and approached Johnson's bedside. "I wanted to stop by," he said. The soldier, slight and wiry, was dressed in jeans and a sweatshirt. A long scar zigzagged down the right side of his neck, and much of his left arm was missing, replaced by a prosthesis that ended in two curved steel hooks. He was Adam Replogle, a twenty-four-year-old sergeant from Denver. He addressed Johnson directly: "I got hit with an R.P.G. in the chest. I stopped by here on the way through. I wasn't conscious like you, but I know what you're going through." Replogle had been a gunner on an Abrams tank, and his unit came under attack by insurgents in Karbala in May. He was evacuated to a field hospital, then to Landstuhl, where he was stabilized before being sent to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, in Washington. Wolfowitz, who regularly visits the hospital, came to know him there. (When Wolfowitz is asked if he ever wonders about the war's costs, he answers, "Every time I visit Walter Reed.") The Army flew Replogle back to Germany for a reunion with his unit, which had recently returned from Iraq, and he wanted to stop by Landstuhl to offer encouragement.

Replogle said, "You hear about Karbala? That's where I got hit. Where were you hit?"

"Baghdad."

"Sadr City?"

"No. Five South."

"We ran into some smack back in Sadr City a while ago," Replogle said. "They got a lotta radicals out there. Al-Sadr keeps them around."

This aroused Sergeant Johnson. "It's amazing," he said. "You see these kids around you, 'Mister, mister, give me water! Give me food!' And you dig around, tryin' to give it to 'em, and you give it to 'em. And then, when you're done, they throw rocks at you. You think, Hey, you little bastard!"

"They don't know how to act, man," Replogle replied. "They got their freedom, they don't know how to act. You can't really blame 'em for it. It's frustrating over there. I'll tell you one thing, man. Just maintain. You can feel a couple of different ways about Iraq. You can feel bad. But when people ask you questions, man, you just tell 'em. They gotta know about the good things we did. We're not down there smackin' people around."

Johnson said that he'd sometimes had difficulty convincing his own soldiers of the utility of their mission. "There's this long street, we clean it up. Couple of weeks later, it's trashed up again. I get a lotta guys that go, 'What are we doing out here?' I say to 'em, 'We'll come back here, let 'em see our work.' 'Sarge, they'll tear it up again.' 'Well, that's our job. Get the trash outta the street, clear the street, make this place a little better.' But they don't understand."

Wolfowitz stood by Johnson's bed, listening. An aide handed him a copy of *Time*, the issue that featured the American soldier as Person of the Year. Wolfowitz signed it to a "true American hero," and then leaned over the hospital bed and looked Johnson in the eye. "I'll tell you, no matter what people think about the war, ninety-eight per cent of them love our soldiers," he said. "Period. It's really the truth. So don't confuse the fight about the policy for the people. I'm sure we're going to win, and one day people will feel about you guys the way we feel about the guys who won World War Two. The world didn't look so great in 1945-46. It took a little while to get it done. You're getting it done."

And so it went, room by room, unit by unit. In one darkened room, a soldier with the build of an offensive lineman lay unconscious, his bare feet extending from the sheet covering his gurney. His wife stood at his side. When Wolfowitz entered the room, she smiled and reported the latest update from the doctors. Then she began to talk about her husband's long deployment, growing more emotional as she spoke. "Six months is one thing," she said, "but a year, which usually becomes thirteen or fourteen months, is just too much." As she began to cry, an aide closed the door, and Wolfowitz spent several minutes with her privately.

Later that day, Wolfowitz flew by

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I felt achy and awful. Then, suddenly, it went away!
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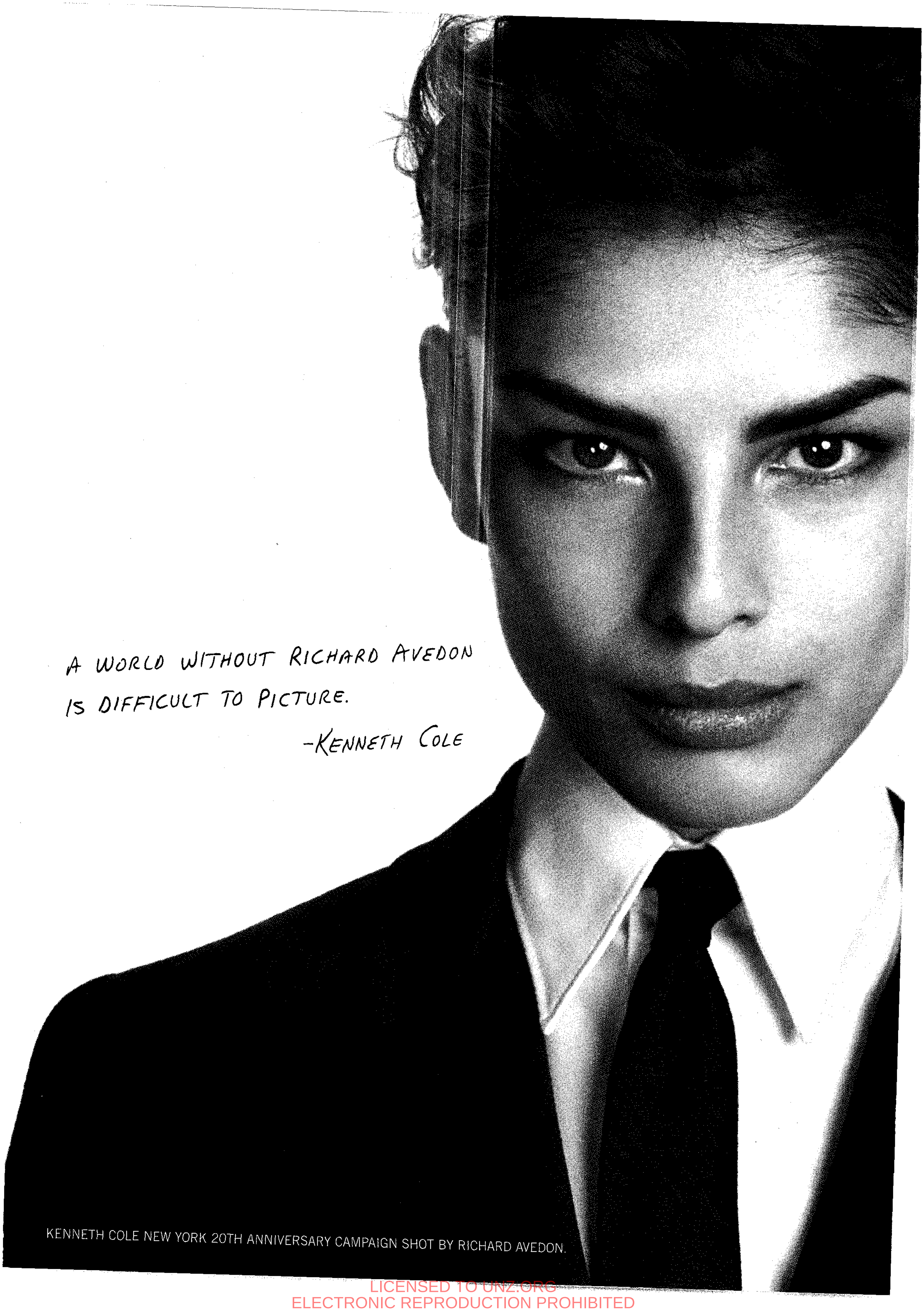
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• •

helicopter to Wiesbaden, for a ceremony marking the return of the 1st Armored Division. It was a large and clamorous event, attended by, among others, the American Ambassador to Germany, Daniel Coats; the Army Chief of Staff, General Peter Schoomaker; and the V Corps commander, Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez. Such homecomings are always cause for celebration, but the return of the 1st Armored Division bore special significance. Old Ironsides, as the division calls itself, is perhaps the most put-upon unit in the war. It had rolled into Iraq just after the end of major combat operations, and was assigned the tough sectors of Baghdad, among them Sadr City. When the division's yearlong deployment ended, last spring, some of its units were packed and were waiting at the airfield for the flight back to Germany. Then the division's commander, Major General Martin E. Dempsey, broke the bad news: the sudden upsurge in fighting required more force, and the division's deployment had been extended. Everyone knew what that meant: some of the men who had made it through a year in Iraq now stood a chance of not returning home whole, or at all. Adam Replogle was one of those soldiers.

Wolfowitz made one other stop that day. It was in Würzburg, at the headquarters of the 1st Infantry Division (the Big Red One). The division's commander, Major General John R. S. Batiste, had been Wolfowitz's military adviser at the Pentagon, and is currently deployed in Iraq. Wolfowitz had visited Batiste in January, before the division moved out, and the atmosphere had been pointedly gung ho. Batiste had adopted as the division's motto a quote from F.D.R., which he felt captured the Big Red One's attitude toward its coming mission in Iraq: "When you see a rattlesnake poised to strike, you do not wait until it has struck before you crush him."

"The Secretary will love that quote," Wolfowitz had told Batiste.

Wolfowitz had seen Batiste again in June, this time in Iraq, at the division's forward post, near Tikrit. The mood was more subdued then, and Batiste had adopted a new motto, this one, as it happens, from Gerald Ford: "There is no way we can go forward except together, and no way anybody can win except by serving the people's urgent needs. We cannot stand still or slip backwards. We must go forward now together." The words reflected the then emerging exit strategy, which was to set up an Iraqi government and an Iraqi security force to fight the insurgency, allowing the Americans to pull back and, eventually, to withdraw.

Now, in Würzburg, the headquarters staff was reduced to a skeletal rear detachment. Still, at a luncheon given in Wolfowitz's honor, the large ballroom was packed, filled with the spouses and family members left behind. Following the custom of their tightly insular culture, the women betrayed no indication of anxiety over their men "down-range," as they refer to the battlefield of Iraq. They chatted gaily about the food, catered by a favorite local restaurant, and talked about their children. Wolfowitz showed them a video recorded by the First Lady, and they reacted with a standing ovation. Then he took questions. One woman asked whether anything could be done about the long deployments. The Pentagon is working on it, Wolfowitz assured her. Finally, someone asked, How will this war be won? What will victory look like?

Wolfowitz responded that in January Iraq will hold elections. The resulting transitional government will write a permanent constitution. That government will run Iraq for a year, until elections at the end of 2005 produce a permanent, fully independent government. By then, he said, American forces will have trained several Iraqi Army divisions and, equally important, fifty or more battalions of the Iraqi National Guard, the domestic stability force. Reaching down to the table and knocking wood, Wolfowitz mentioned recent progress in regard to the National Guard, noting the Iraqis' participation in the wresting of Samarra from the insurgents' control.

While the retaking of Samarra was indeed a welcome event, it may not be a wholly accurate measure of the progress being made by Iraqi forces. The key Iraqi unit in Samarra, the 36th Battalion, was the same one that in August prevailed in Najaf, and it was the only Iraqi unit that did not flee during the Falluja uprising last spring. The 36th Battalion, however, is exceptional. It is composed of fighting forces loyal to various political factions, mostly Kurdish, and it was American policy for much of the first year of the occupation to discourage the development of such units, for fear of losing control of them.

Wolfowitz spoke of the September visit to Washington by the interim Iraqi Prime Minister, Ayad Allawi. He quoted at length from Allawi's optimistic speech to a joint session of Congress, which Wolfowitz said had been characterized by some members of Congress as one of the best speeches ever delivered on the floor of the House.

Wolfowitz did not discuss a meeting between Allawi and President Bush during that visit, in which the Iraqi Prime Minister had been less optimistic. Allawi had spoken to the President about the conundrum facing him and the coalition: the insurgency required forceful action, but any forceful action by coalition troops would underline the negative impression of an occupation, thus fuelling the insurgency. Allawi asked the President to provide more training of Iraqi troops and more equipment.

The day after Wolfowitz left Washington on this trip, Allawi had sent, via the American Embassy, a letter to Bush. In it, he again spoke insistently about the situation in Iraq on the ground. The American training program, he said, was fine, but it was proceeding too slowly; the bulk of trained and equipped Iraqi forces would not be ready until well after the January elections, Allawi said, "which is simply too late." Allawi said that he and the coalition needed an expanded plan for Iraqi forces, "to be implemented now." He said that Iraq had to make a visible and effective show of force, and reminded Bush of what he had told him in Washington—that Iraq needed at least two trained and equipped Iraqi mechanized divisions. It was a huge request.

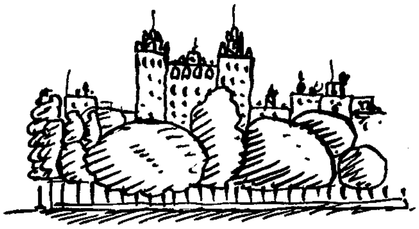
American commanders have been hesitant to provide Iraqis with tanks, arguing that the Iraqis are not yet ready for them. Wolfowitz, noting that American forces are glad to have the armored-tank protection for themselves, has said that he thinks the Iraqis will get at least a mechanized brigade fairly soon.

In his letter, Allawi asked Bush to convene a summit this month in Baghdad, with an American delegation headed by Wolfowitz. Such a high-profile meeting just weeks before the American election was unlikely, and the proposal may simply have been Allawi's way of prodding the Administration. In any case, he was visited in Baghdad the following week by Donald Rumsfeld, who was in the region for a meeting with his commanders.

After leaving Iraq, Rumsfeld travelled to Romania for a NATO meeting. Discussing Allawi's request for tanks, he proposed a characteristically Rumsfeldian solution. The new members of NATO—those countries which Rumsfeld once called the "new Europe"—had been members of the old Warsaw Pact, which had a surplus of Soviet weapons. One way they could help, Rumsfeld suggested, was by supplying their Soviet-era tanks to the fledgling Iraqi Army.

The big miscalculation underlying the American-led intervention in Iraq was that the enemy would recognize defeat, and submit. When the Administration was faced with an insurgency, a new calculation—one that was advocated by Wolfowitz—was made: putting an Iraqi imprimatur on the mission would defuse the insurgency. The first step was the hastened transfer of sovereignty, last June. Yet the insurgency rages on, and Allawi worries about appearing to be an American puppet. Although he assured President Bush in his letter that he had "absolutely no intention" of changing his convictions or policies, he warned, "I am concerned by the concerted effort by some Iraqis and foreigners to paint my government as too close to the US and her allies." He went on, "This is likely to get worse as elections approach, and makes it harder to rebuild political unity and to isolate the insurgents." Now the Bush war policy depends upon a final calculation—that an Iraqi security force can be made strong enough, soon enough, to allow the mostly American multinational force to recede.

Wolfowitz seems more confident about this prospect than Allawi does. Speaking in Germany to the spouses of the 1st Infantry Division's soldiers, Wolfowitz said, "I think you're going to see a major change over the course of the next six months or a year." He said he hoped that progress with the Iraqi force might go even faster than expected. "At the moment, we're just planning for the worst," he said. Then he added, "But a lot of good should happen this coming year." ♦



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SHOUTS & MURMURS

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

BY PAUL SIMMS

> The demonstrators on Sunday performed for an audience of police officers and agents lined up in front of the convention hall. They played as if Mr. Bush were there. I watched a woman do a jazz riff on the word "shame," while her companion improvised on a small African whistle.
>
> —*Anna Deavere Smith, in the Times.*

It's funny sometimes to think back, these many decades later, and realize how innocently it all started.

Who, back in those days, would have guessed that the jazz-riff-singing woman (with her modal refrain of "Shame shame shame shame shame!") would have any effect on anything anywhere? Or that her partner's harmonious (then dissonant, then harmonious again) toots and trills on that small African whistle would play any part in history?

Not that many people actually saw the "Shame!"-warbler or her humble whistle-buddy in action. Most who did just kept walking. If you disagreed with the party in power (because, remember, this was back in the days when we had a two-party system), you might have thought, Good for them! Or: I wish my bullhorn were louder. Or: Well, that's not really helping us stay on message.

And if you were a believer in the man who was then President and you passed by the scat-singer-of-"Shame!" and her small-African-whistle accompanist, you might have rolled your eyes and murmured, "Takes all kinds, huh?" Or "Must be a full moon!" Or "Fucking whack-jobs."

Who knows? And, really, who cares? Because all of that was Before. Before a television cameraman (looking through his B-roll footage for humorous Convention snippets to pad out a Thursday-night sports-bloopers package) happened upon the now legendary twelve-second video clip of the monosyllabic mouth musician and the tin-whistle virtuoso (whose gender, to this day, remains unknown). Before the haunting "Shame!" refrain (with whistled obbligato) aired on that local station. Before some anonymous soul uploaded it to that thing we used to call "the Internet."

Who could have imagined what was to come?

Who could have imagined that the clip would circulate so widely that the Democratic candidate himself would eventually mention the (as he put it) "Singer of 'Shame!' " and the "Whistler of Change" in a stump speech? Or that his offhand salute would be met, in Ames, Iowa, with applause and cheering so loud and prolonged that, after fifteen minutes of near-pandemonium, he finally just shrugged, flashed the peace sign, and left the stage, while the ovation raged on (as it continued to rage, until sunrise the next day—twelve full hours after the candidate's unnoticed departure)?

Who could have imagined that this blurry clip of the now notorious semi-musical duo would become so unignorable that even the sitting President—against whom their protest was directed—started closing his campaign speeches with a heartfelt apology for the actions that he believed their refrain of "Shame! Shame! (*toot!*) Shame! (*toot! toot!*) Shame!" referred to?

Who would have thought that Osama bin Laden himself would end up hearing a crackly shortwave broadcast of the shame-lady's song and the whistle-person's merry (then dissonant, then merry again) *tweetle-tee-tweets* and *toodle-dee-doos*, and emerge from his super-secret cave to renounce religious extremism and then execute himself?

Had I not seen these things myself, through the eyes of the young man I once was, I'd probably call it legend. But now I am old. I am not long for this world. It's true. Despite the miraculous medical advances we've seen in the past decades (most of them due to scientific discoveries bestowed upon us by the once blighted continent of Africa, thanks to the groundbreaking research funded by the export of small whistles), I am soon to join ShameLady and Toot in the great hereafter.

But before my final whistle is blown I wanted to tell you how it all began—to remind you that, no matter how modest or silly-seeming or implicitly mockable an act of political protest might seem, it can still change the world.

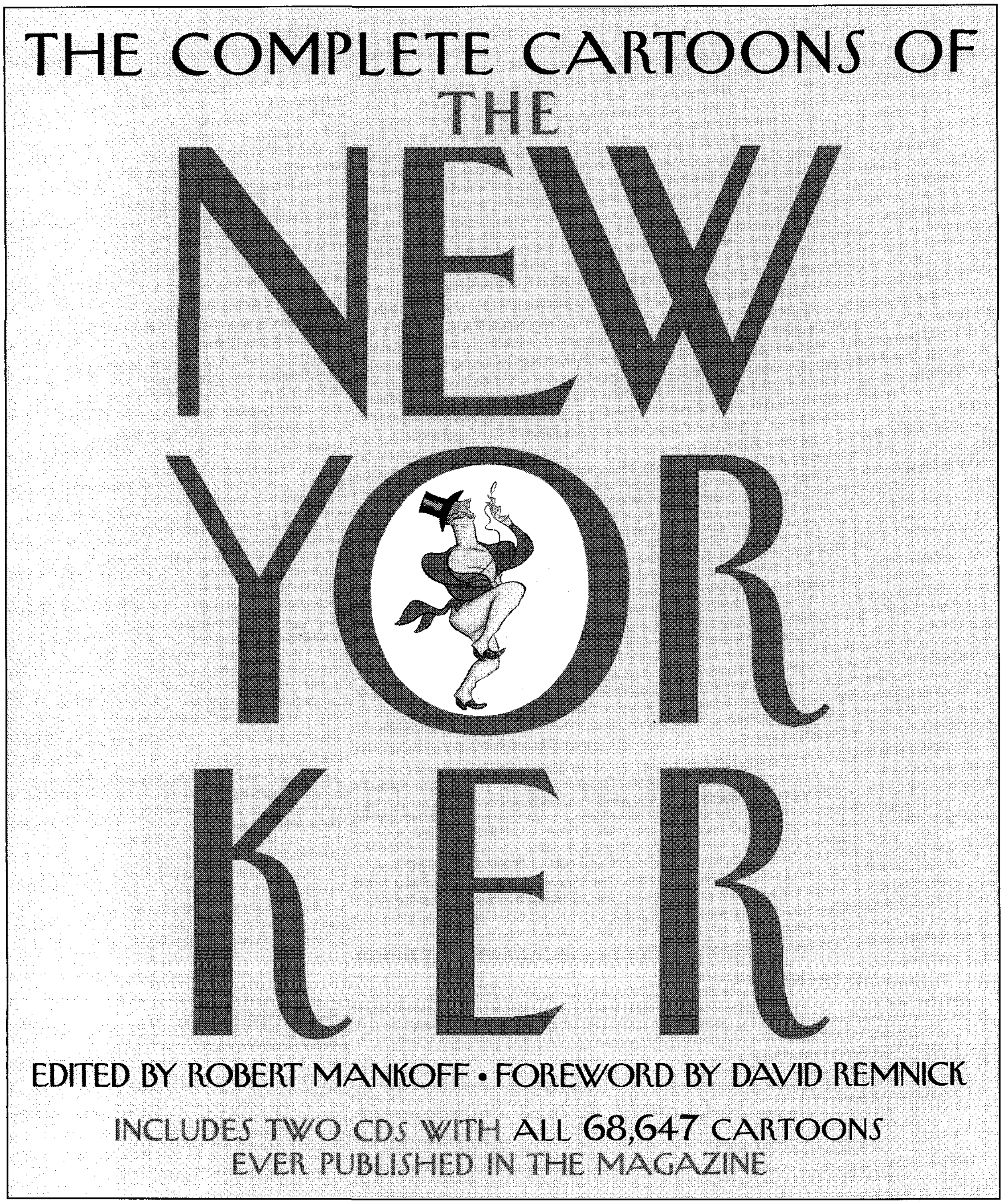
Some of your young friends, I have heard, are beginning to question the mandatory forty-minute-long singing of the Shame Anthem that begins and ends every school day; and some of you, I know, would rather have studied the clarinet or trombone instead of taking the small-African-whistle lessons required of all children (as a prerequisite to someday getting an official ShameLady-and-Toot-approved job). To you I say this: Your discontent is not a uniquely modern malady.

I suspect you've heard the troubling rumors of late—the whispered stories that you won't find written up in either of the newspapers (neither the *Shame Tribune* nor its bitter rival, the *Daily Whistler*). You know what I'm talking about. The stories about Shame-Song Deniers and Small-Whistle Skeptics disappearing in the dark of night, their loved ones left with no explanation. Who knows if these tales are true? Maybe they're just scary stories circulated to encourage productivity among our brothers and sisters who toil in the tin mines, or their fellow-workers who put that tin to such wonderful use in the whistle factories—or even the full-throated song-laborers the world over, whose round-the-clock singing of the "Shame!" refrain powers the Choral Generators, without which we would have neither electricity nor heat nor water nor food nor medicine nor small whistles.

But, if the stories are true, just remember what I've said here. Remember that there was a time—long, long ago—when the Intergalactic Council of Shame and Whistle was not the all-knowing, all-seeing arbiter and provider of all things to all people. And remember that, in the beginning, the inspiration for all that we now know was nothing more than a simple act of dissent on the part of one brave woman with a (sort of) good voice, and her partner, a man or woman who owned a small African whistle.

But I've said too much already, as we old men often do. So be on your way. Please pass on my best Shames to your mother and father.

Toot toot! ♦



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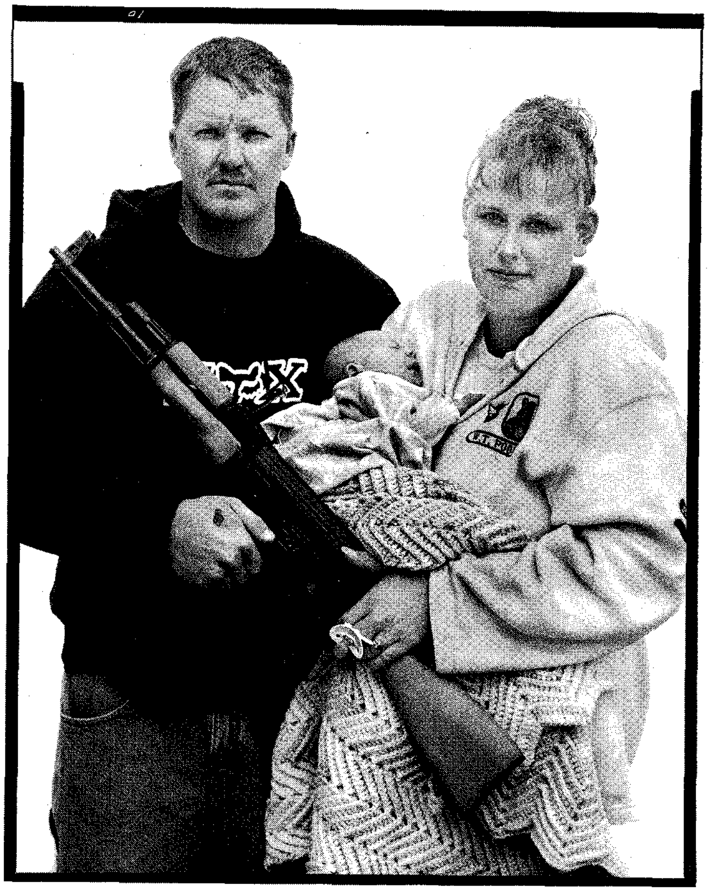

Travis Mair, auto mechanic, and Carol Mair, homemaker, with their daughter, Mackinze, at a gun show in Winnemucca, Nevada.

DEMOCRACY 2004

★★★★

PORTFOLIO BY RICHARD AVEDON

Although, in the course of a sixty-year career, Richard Avedon was known mainly for his originality in portraits and fashion photography, he also confronted the realms of politics, power, suffering, and war. He documented the civil-rights movement in the South, the Vietnam War, mental institutions, and, in a portfolio called "The Family," the Washington establishment of thirty years ago.

Earlier this year, Avedon decided that he would try to capture a sense of the country in the midst of a crucial Presidential election campaign. He travelled well beyond his studio, on East Seventy-fifth Street, visiting the Conventions in Boston and New York, and, among other places, Killeen, Texas; Reno, Nevada; and San Francisco. After more than fifty sessions, he also had a series of sittings scheduled for his return East—with Donald Rumsfeld, William Rehnquist, Alan Greenspan, and William Kristol—but on September 25th in San Antonio, where he had been working with Iraq veterans and was preparing for a sitting at a school, he suffered a cerebral hemorrhage. Six days later, he died, and this portfolio, "Democracy," was left unfinished. ♦

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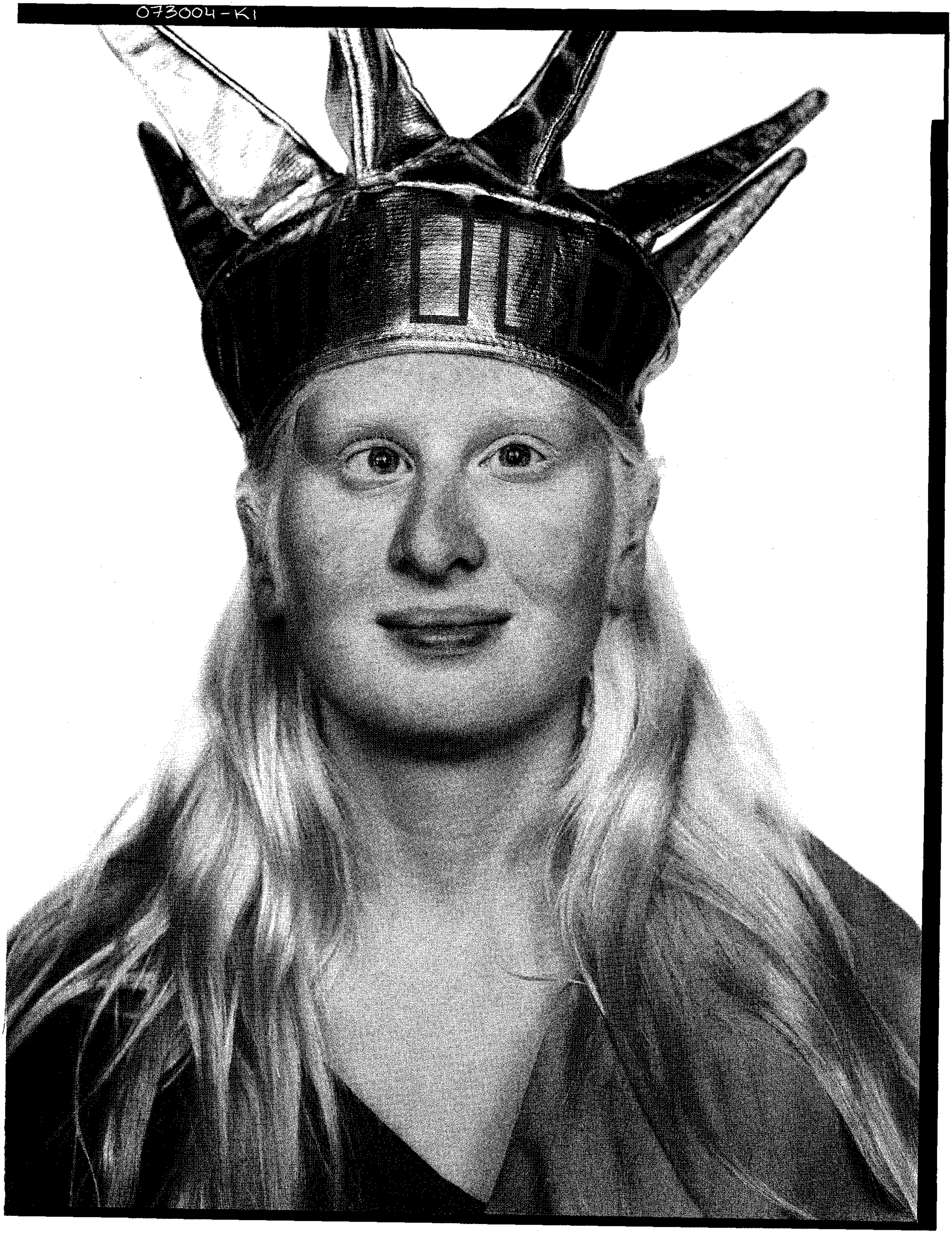
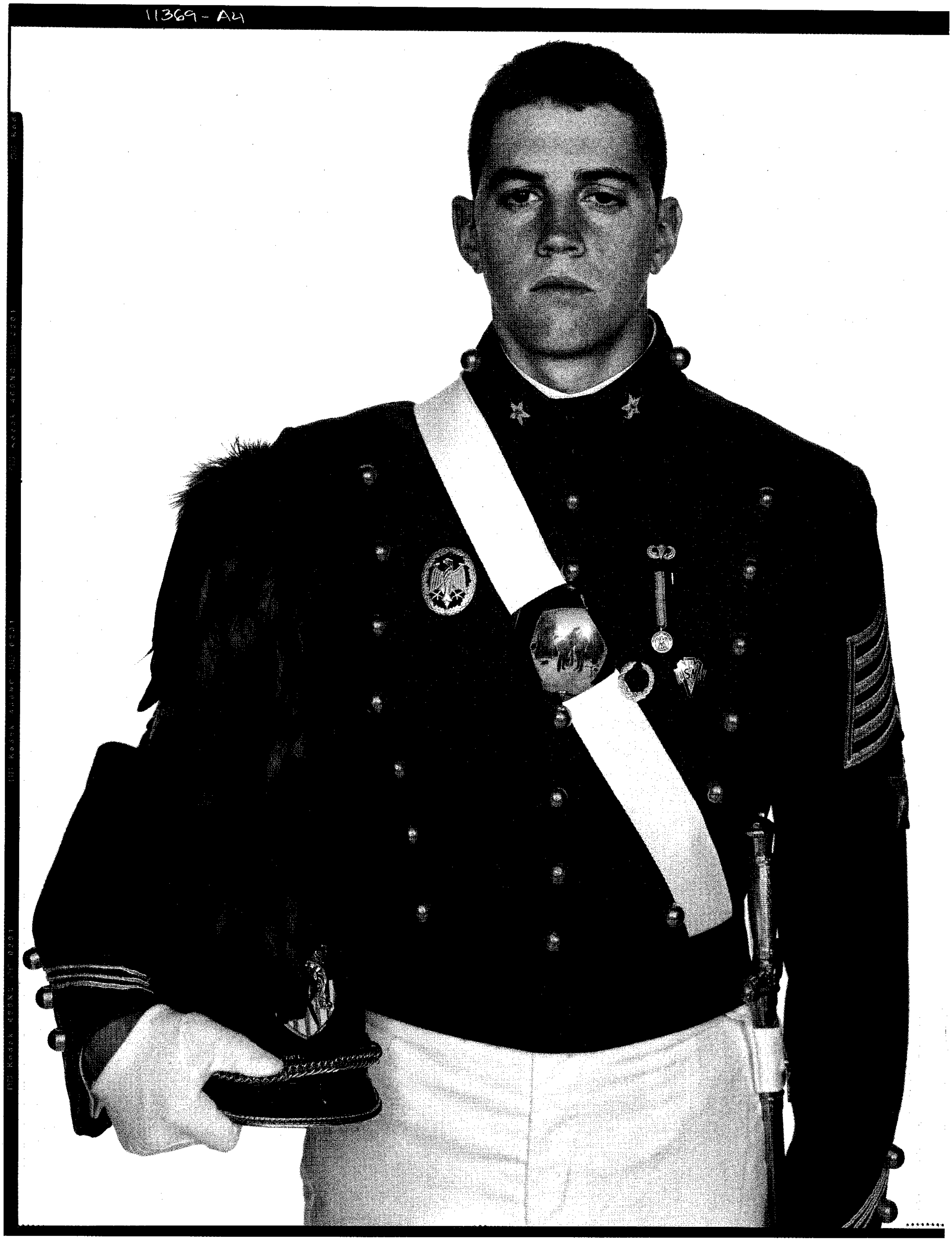
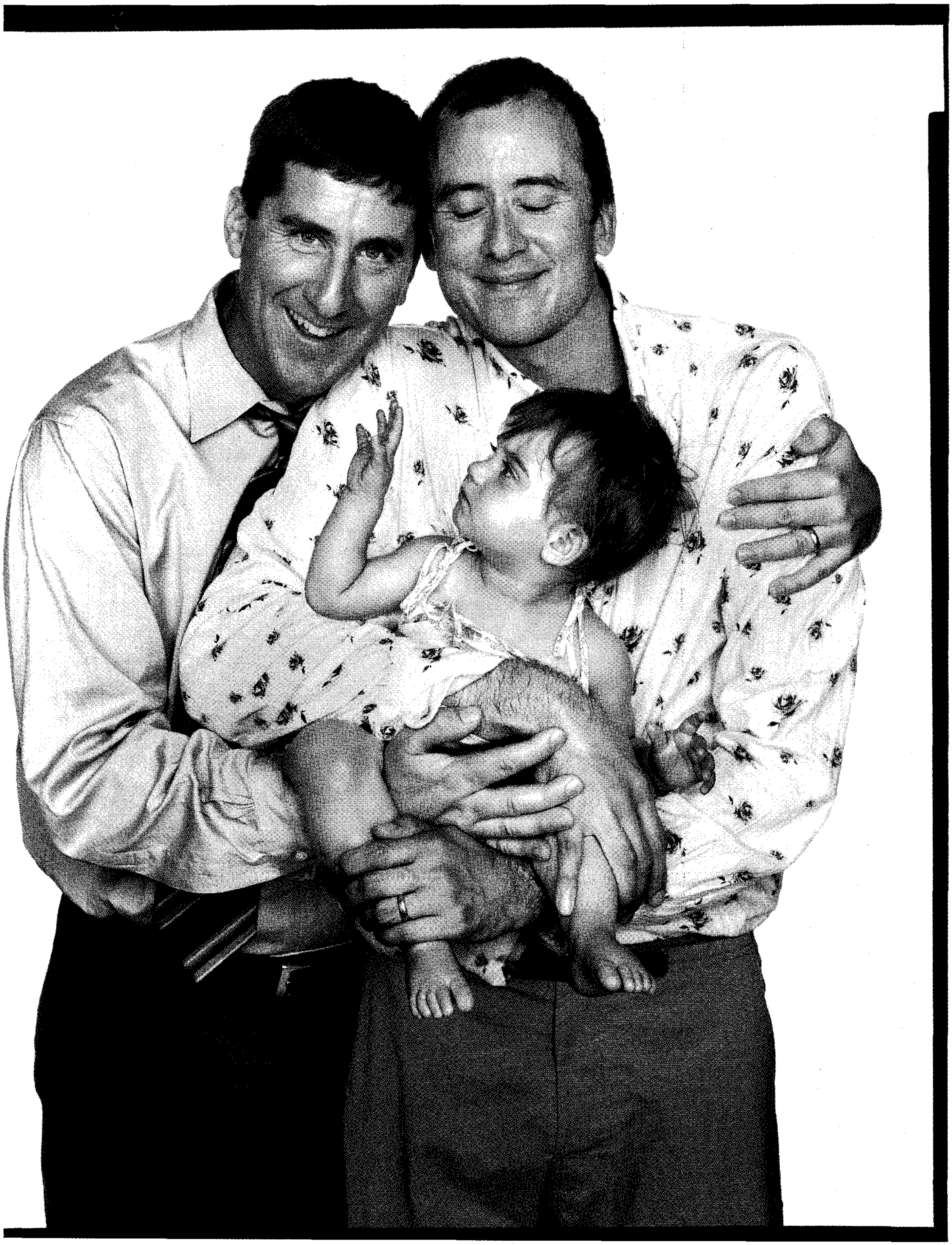


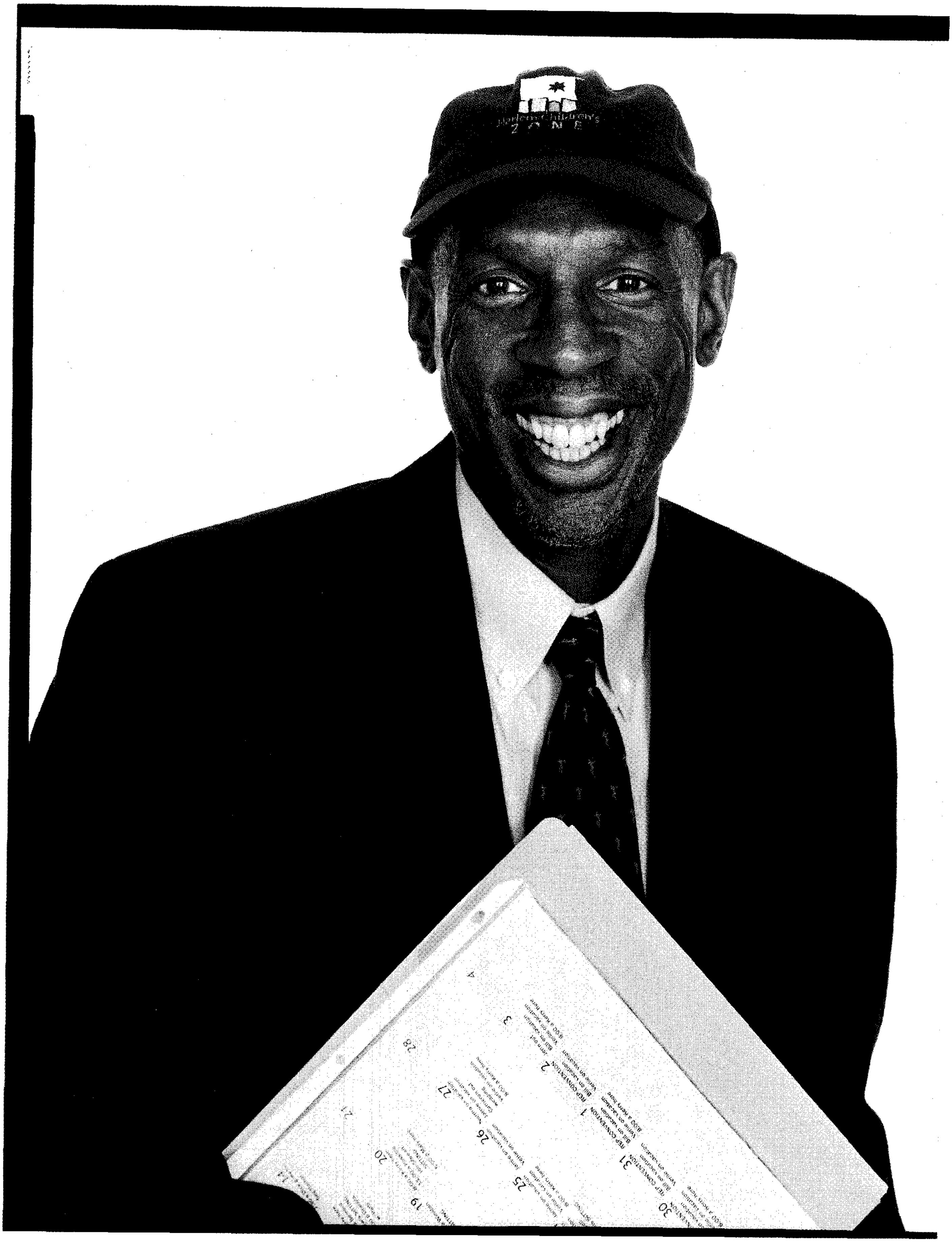
Caitlin Cianflone, Kucinich delegate to the Democratic National Convention; student. Greeley, Colorado.



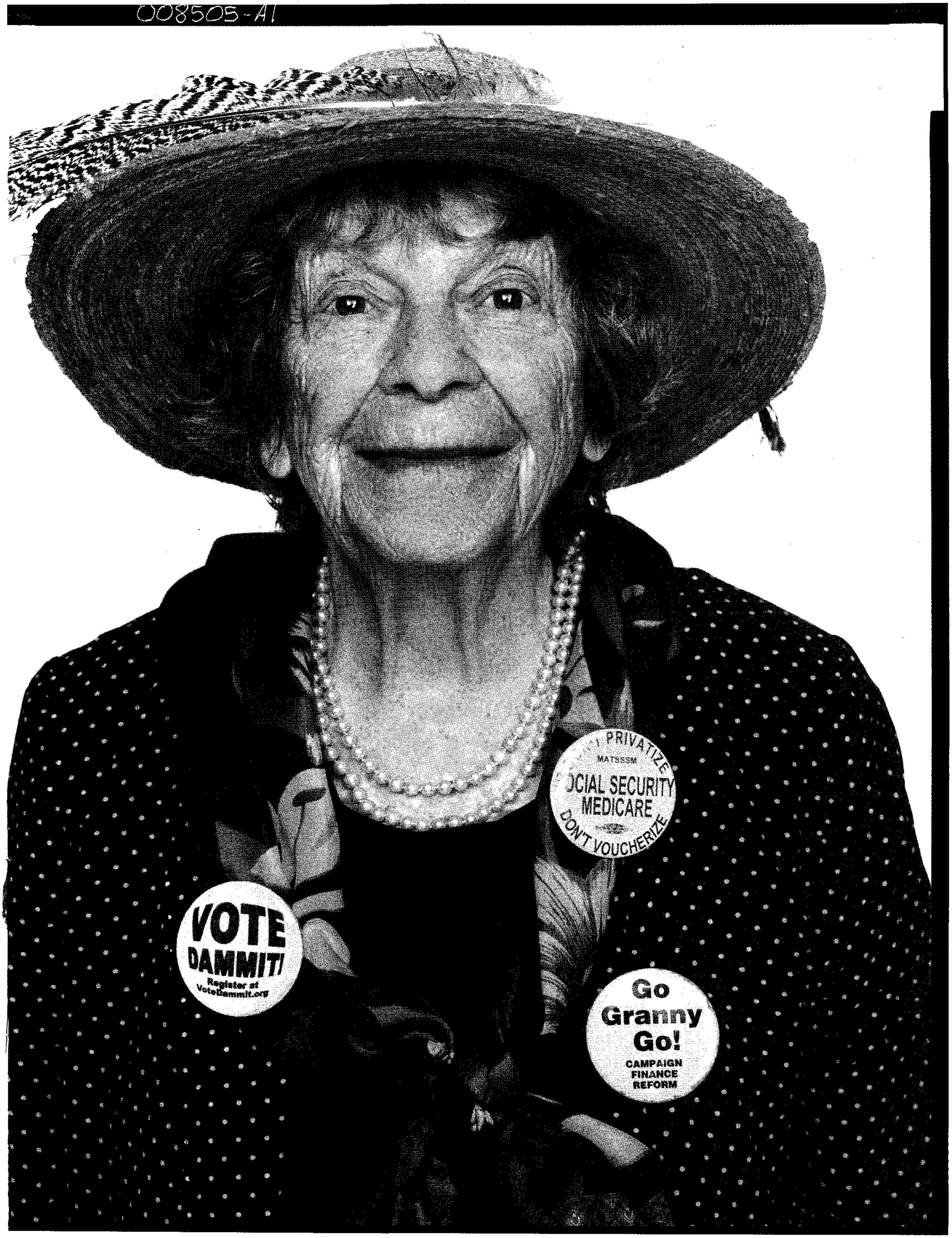
Cadet Ryan Boeka, brigade commander, United States Military Academy. West Point, New York.



Russ Irwin Porter, director, Harvard School of Public Health, and Christian Schlesinger Porter, elementary-school teacher, who were married on May 17th, with their daughter, Nina. Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts.



Geoffrey Canada, president and C.E.O., Harlem Children's Zone; author of "Fist Stick Knife Gun: A Personal History of Violence in America"; advocate for issues concerning violence, children, and community redevelopment. New York City.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PRIVATIZE
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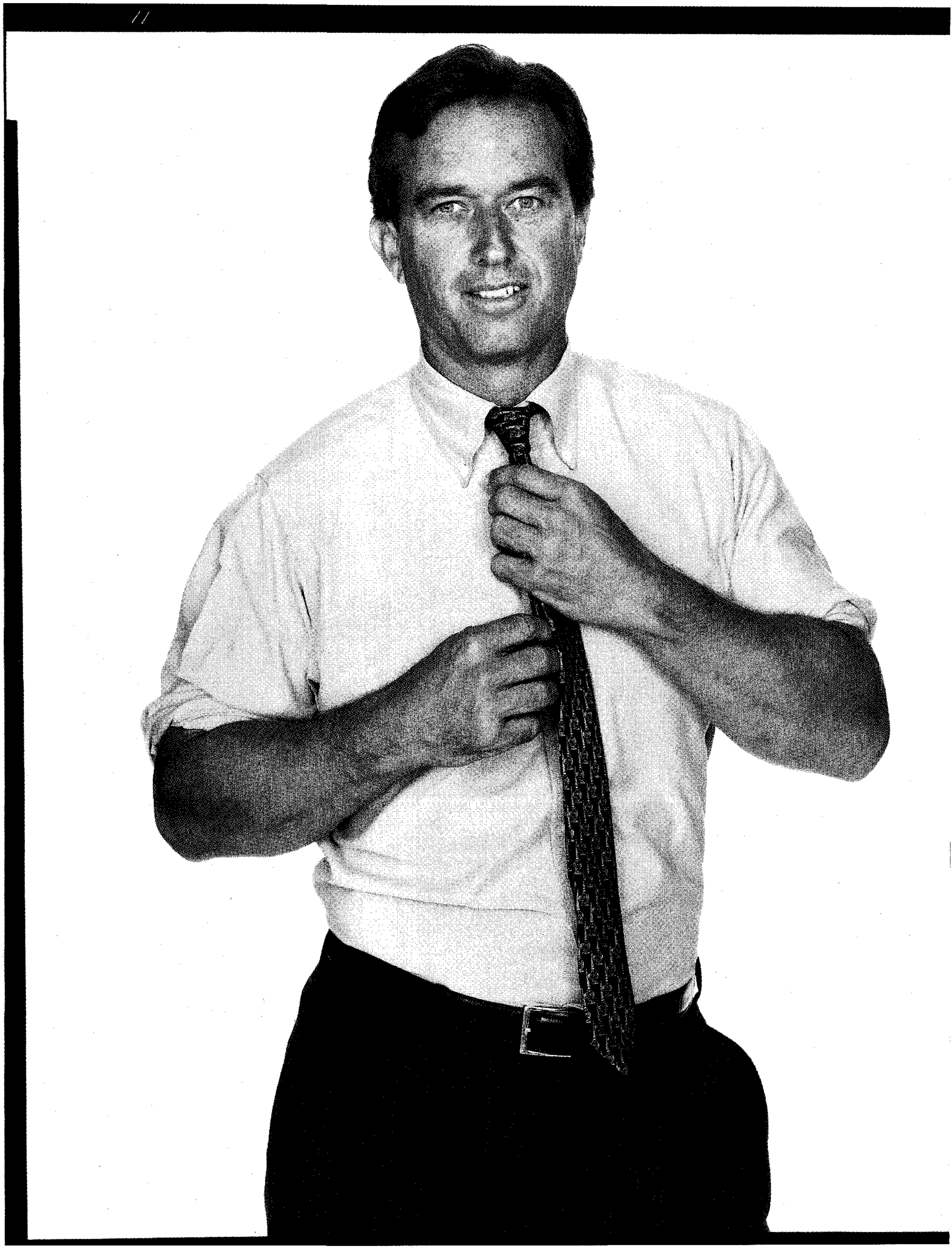
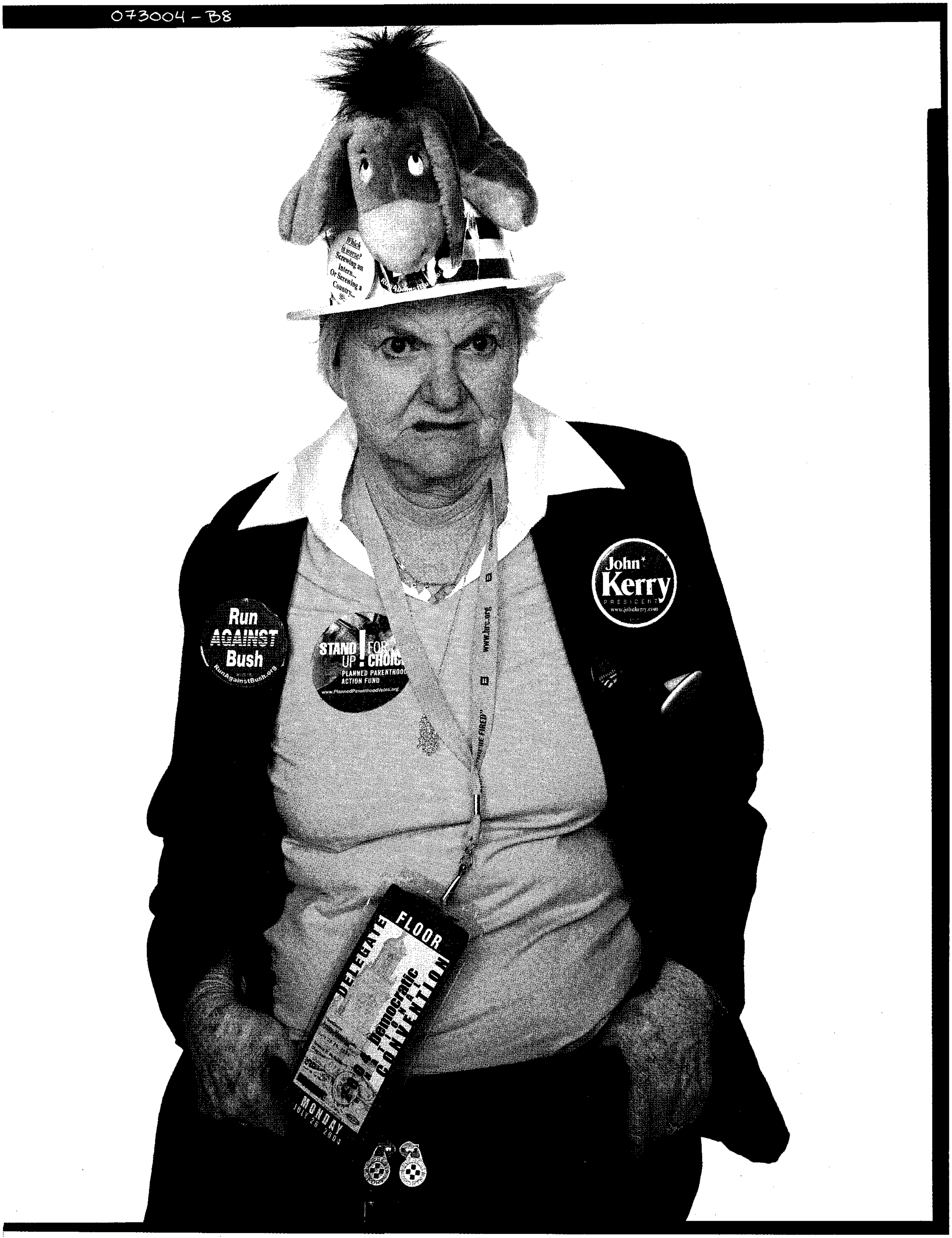
OCIAL SECURITY
MEDICARE
DON'T VOUCHERIZE
VOTE
DAMMIT!
Register at
VoteDammit.org
Go
Granny
Go!
CAMPAIGN
FINANCE
REFORM

Doris (Granny D) Haddock, ninety-four, a U.S. Senate candidate who attended the Democratic Convention, and who in 1999 made a year-long walk across America to rally support for election reform. Dublin, New Hampshire.



Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., president, Waterkeeper Alliance; senior attorney, Natural Resources Defense Council; chief prosecuting attorney, Hudson Riverkeeper. White Plains, New York.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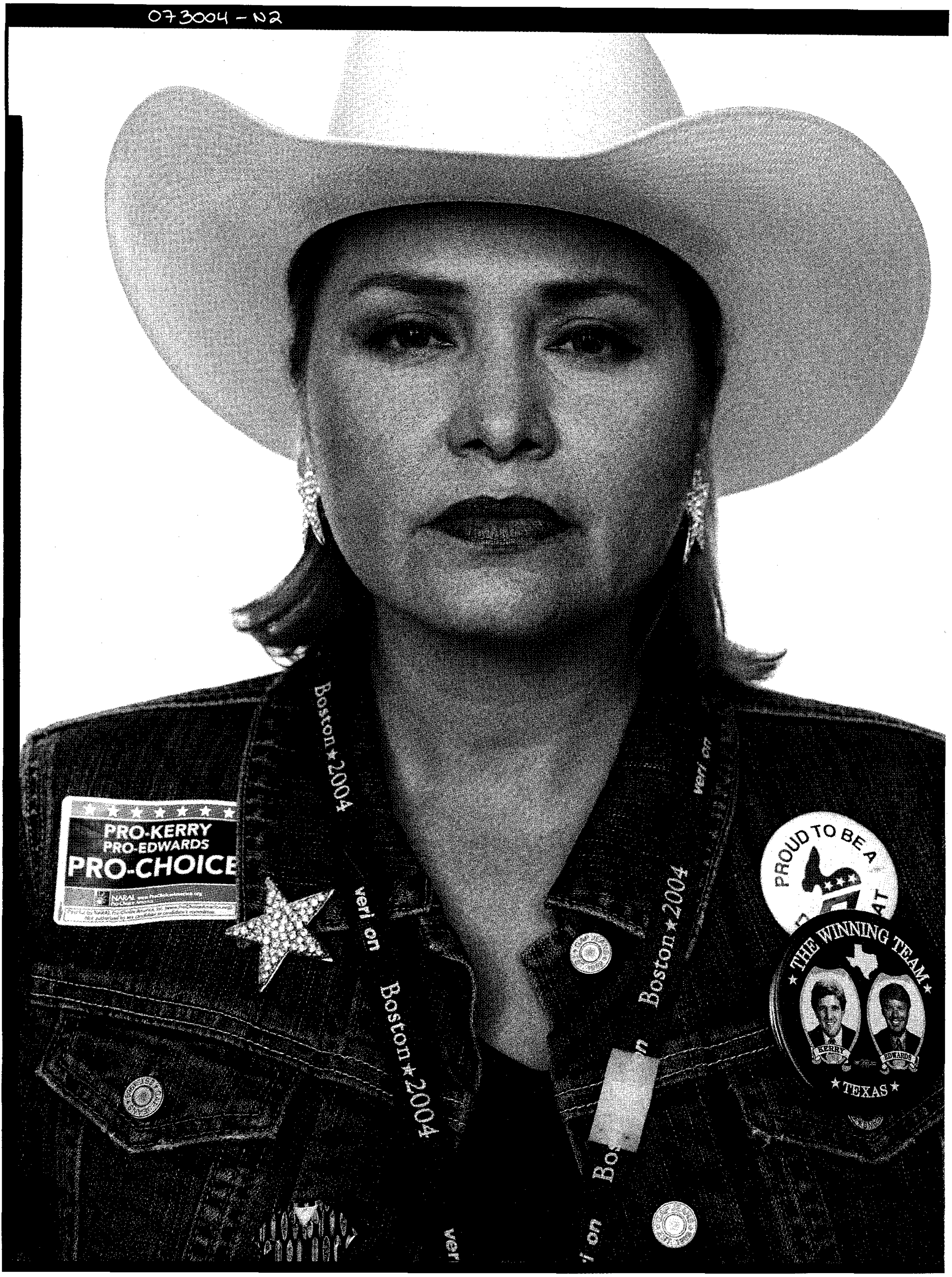
2004 Democratic National CONVENTION
MONDAY
JULY 26 2004

Barbara Schwartz, Democratic Convention delegate; member, Miami-Dade Election Reform Coalition. Miami, Florida.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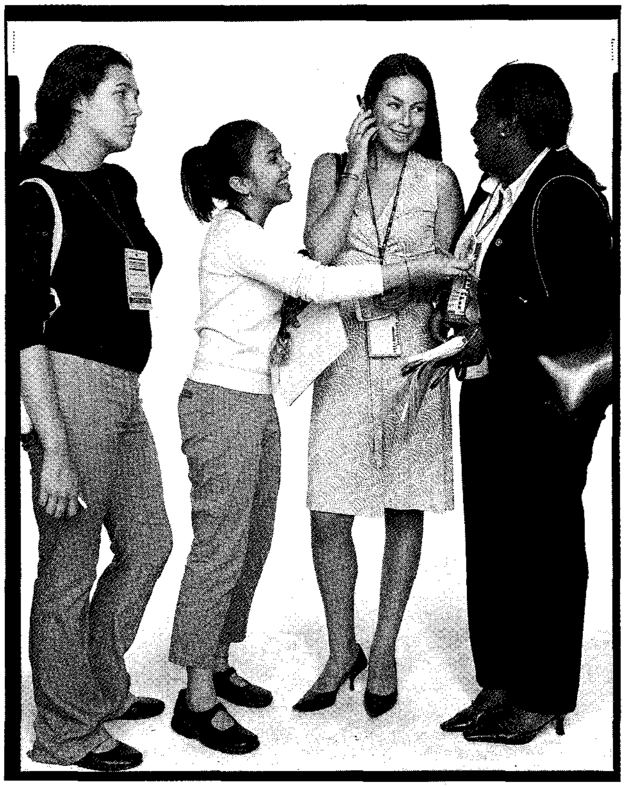
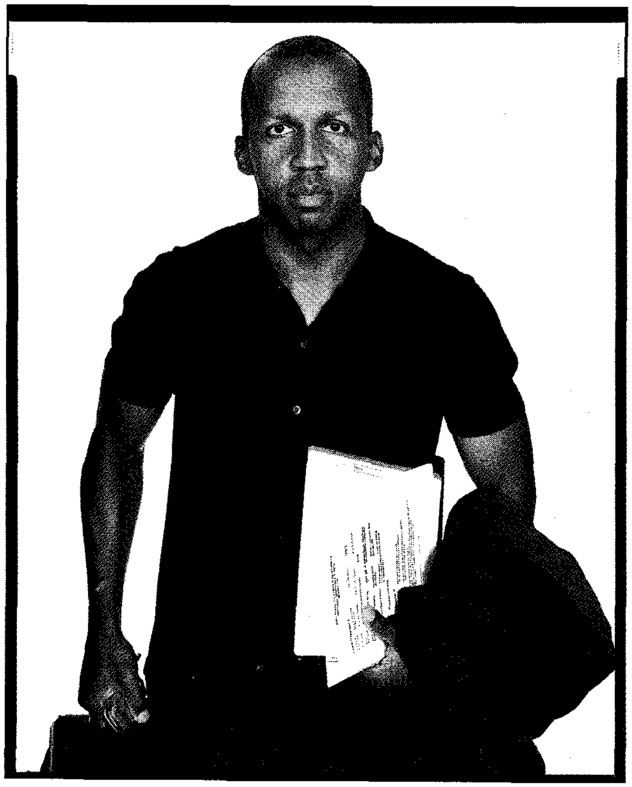
PRO-KERRY
PRO-EDWARDS
PRO-CHOICE
NARAL
PROUD TO BE A
THE WINNING TEAM
KERRY
EDWARDS
★TEXAS★

Mary Alice Palacios, Democratic Convention delegate; justice of the peace. Edinburg, Texas.

Kim Gandy, president, NOW. Gloria Feldt, president, Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Eleanor Smeal, president, Feminist Majority; publisher of Ms. Dolores Huerta, co-founder, United Farm Workers.

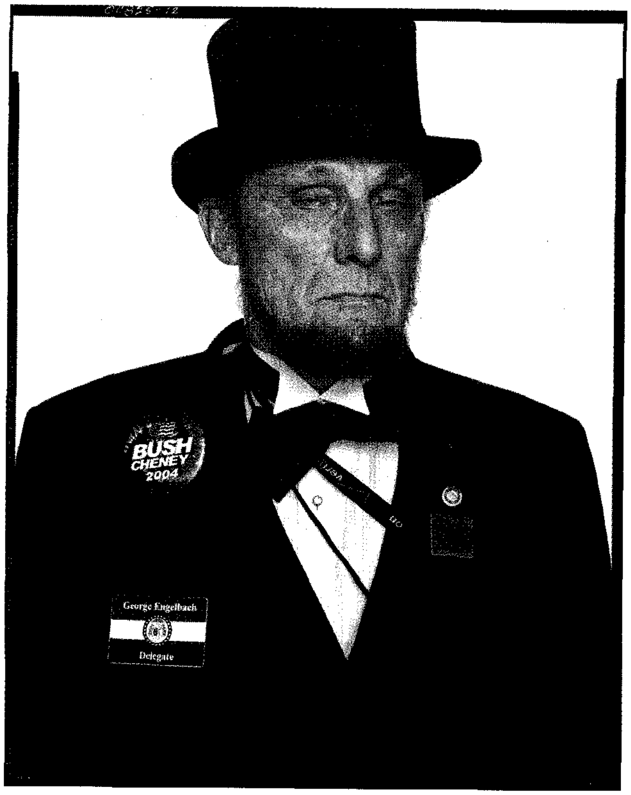


Younger Women's Task Force members: Sarah Hofmann (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania); Cherry Cachero (South Hadley, Massachusetts); Alison Stein, founder (Washington, D.C.); Shacara Lewis (Washington, D.C.).

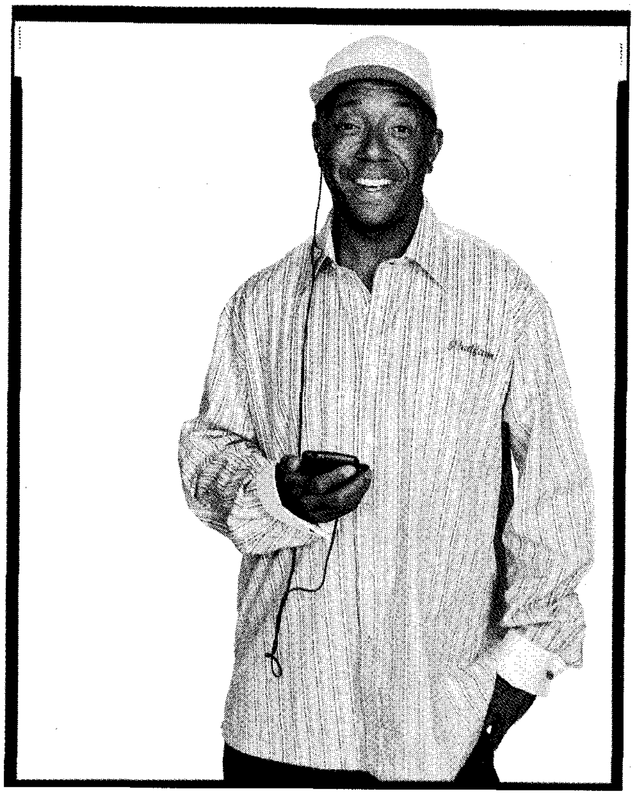


Bryan Stevenson, executive director, Equal Justice Initiative of Alabama; professor, New York University School of Law. Montgomery, Alabama.

Ramona Nitz, Republican delegate. Cherokee, Iowa. Luana Stoltenberg, Republican delegate; state leader of the pro-life group Operation Outcry. Davenport, Iowa.



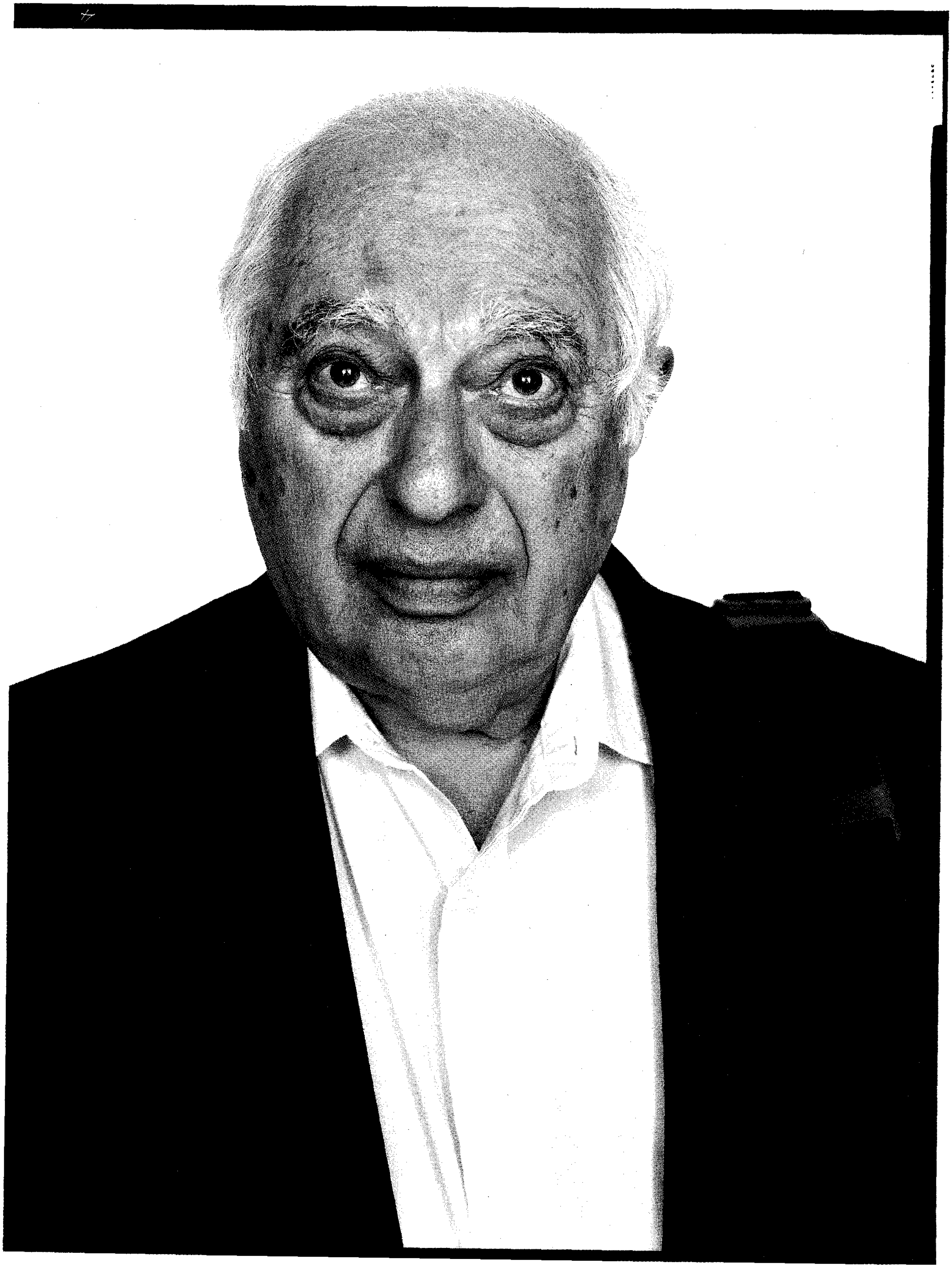
George Engelbach, Republican delegate; farmer; retired sheet-metal worker. Hillsboro, Missouri.



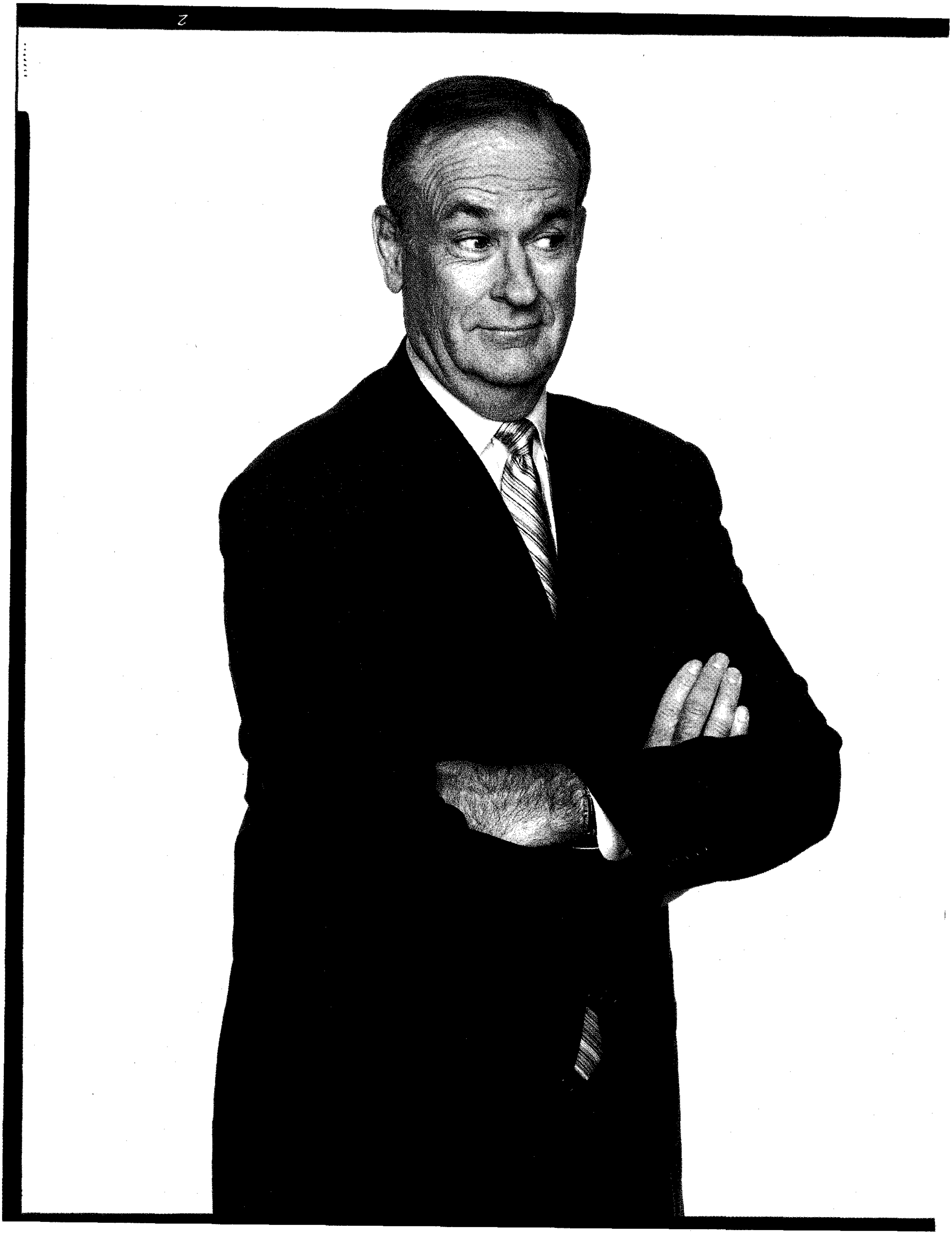
Russell Simmons, chairman, Hip-Hop Summit Action Network; C.E.O., Rush Communications. New York City.

Ruth J. Simmons, president of Brown University. Providence, Rhode Island.

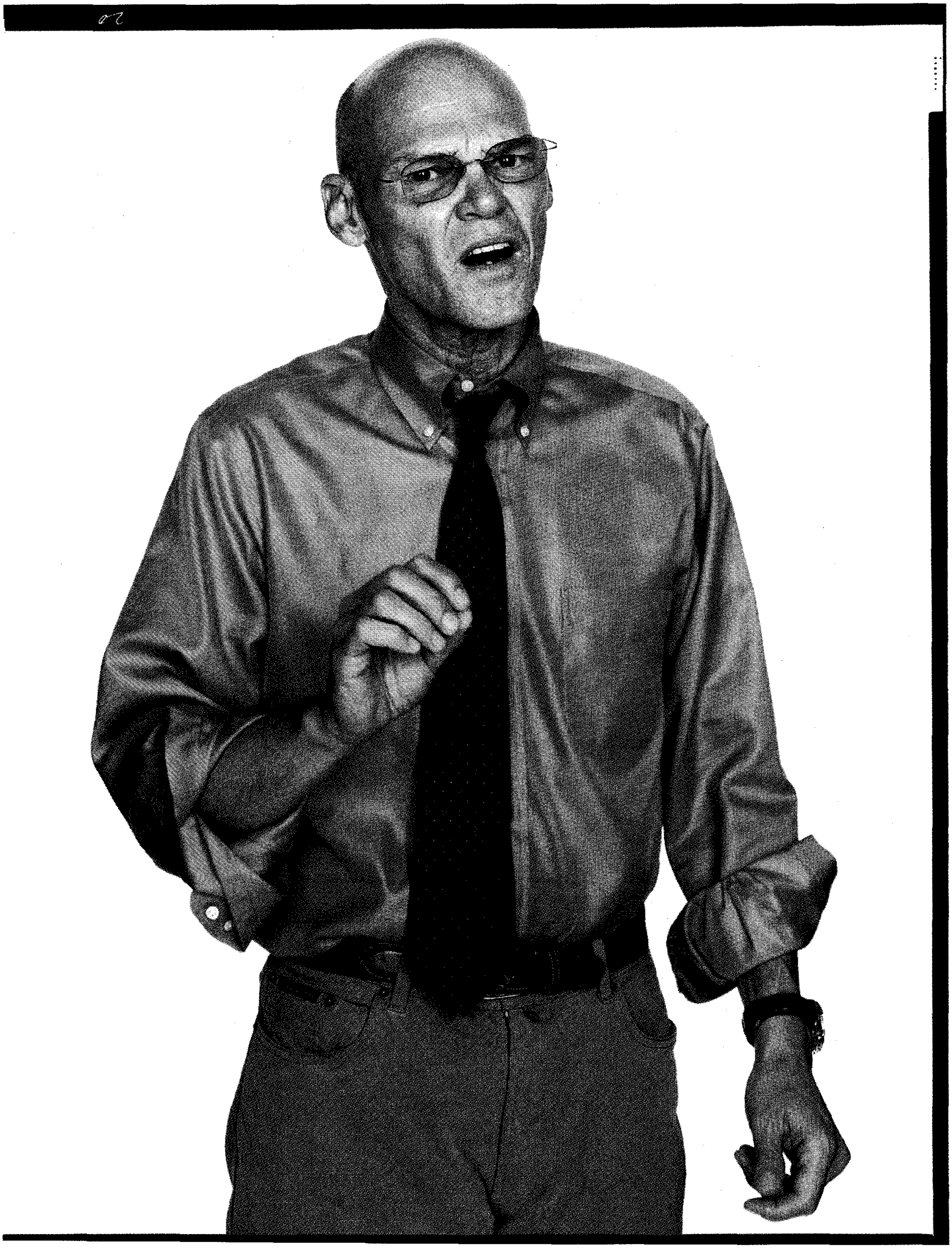
Unite Here union leaders: John Wilhelm, president of the hospitality division (Washington, D.C.), and Bruce Raynor, general president (New York City).



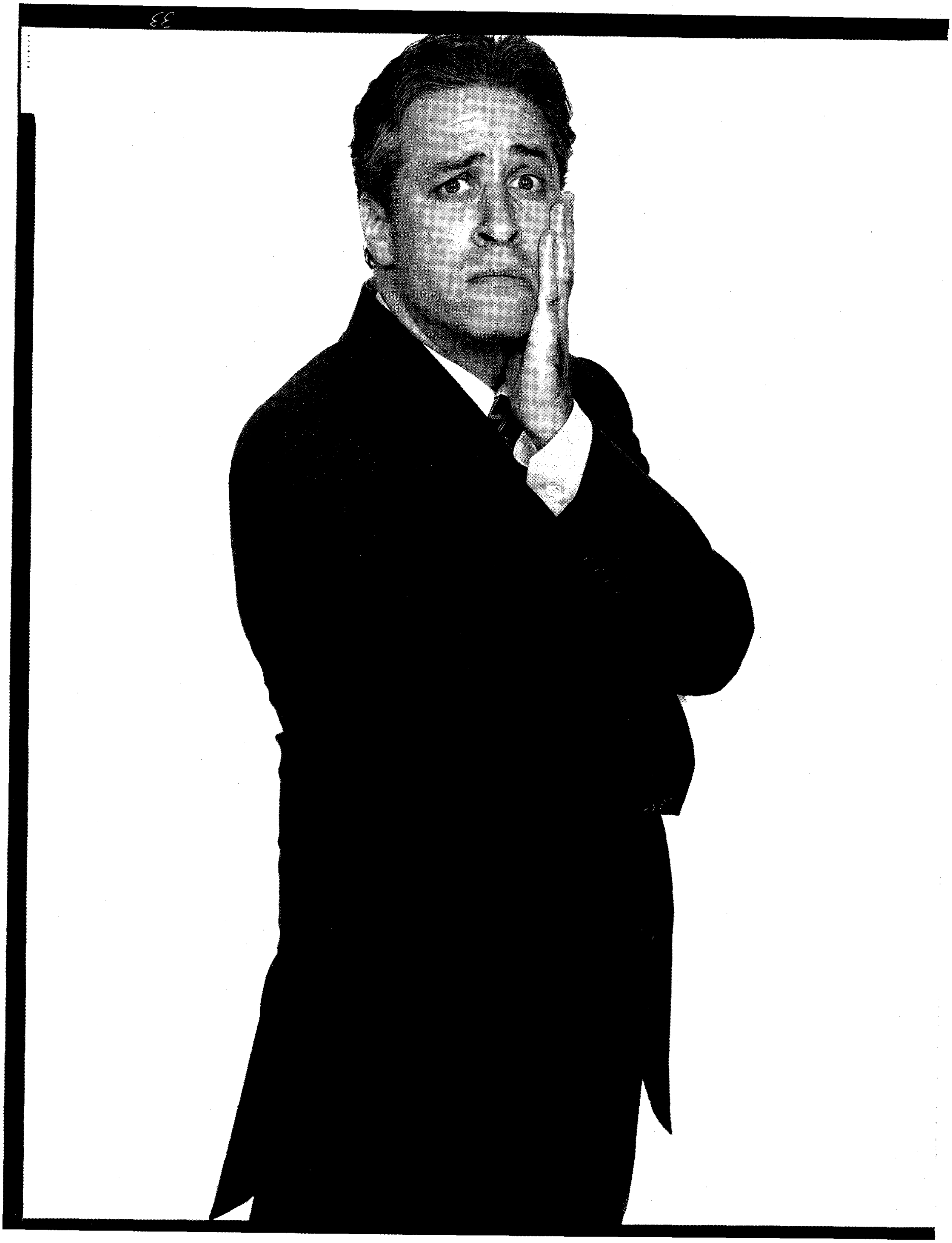
Bernard Lewis, author of "The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror"; professor emeritus of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University. Princeton, New Jersey.



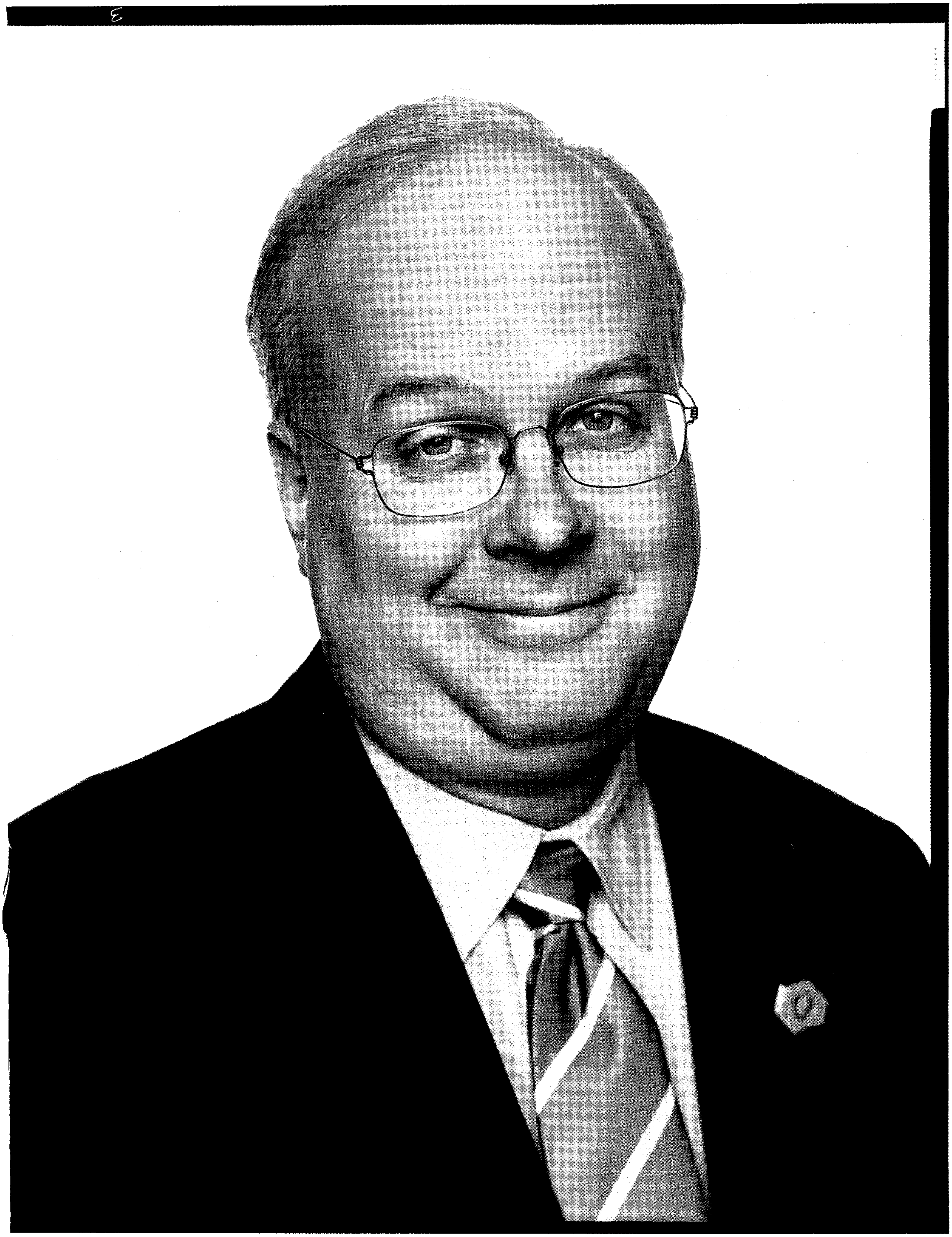
Bill O'Reilly, host, Fox News Channel's "The O'Reilly Factor." New York City.



James Carville, co-host, CNN's "Crossfire"; Democratic political strategist. Alexandria, Virginia.



Jon Stewart, anchor, Comedy Central's "The Daily Show." New York City.



Karl Rove, senior adviser to President George W. Bush. Washington, D.C.

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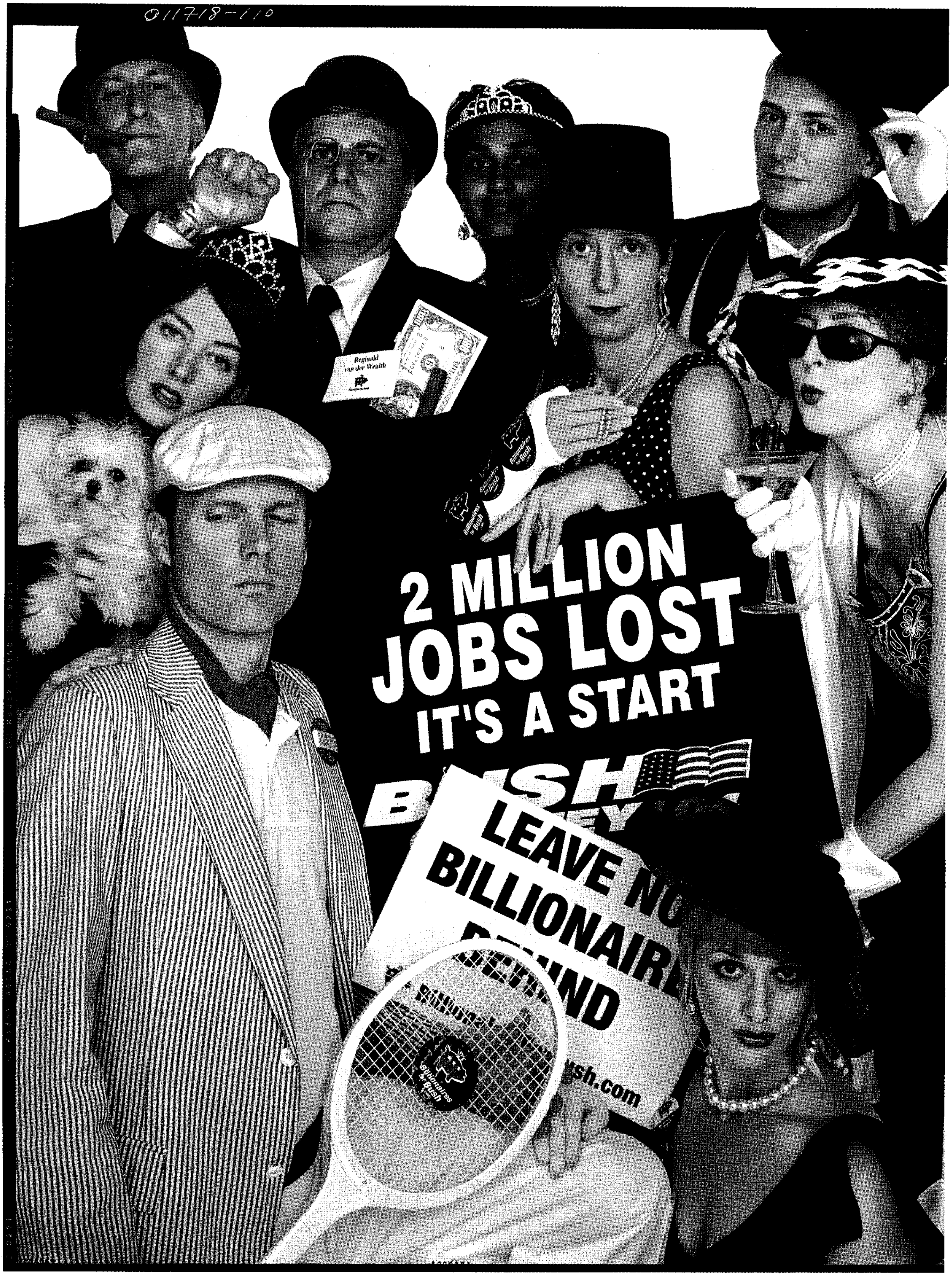
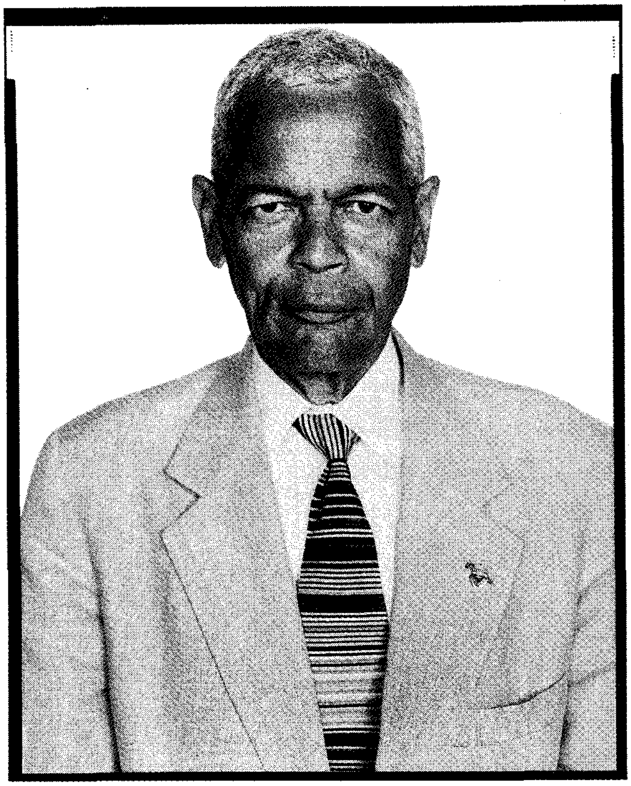
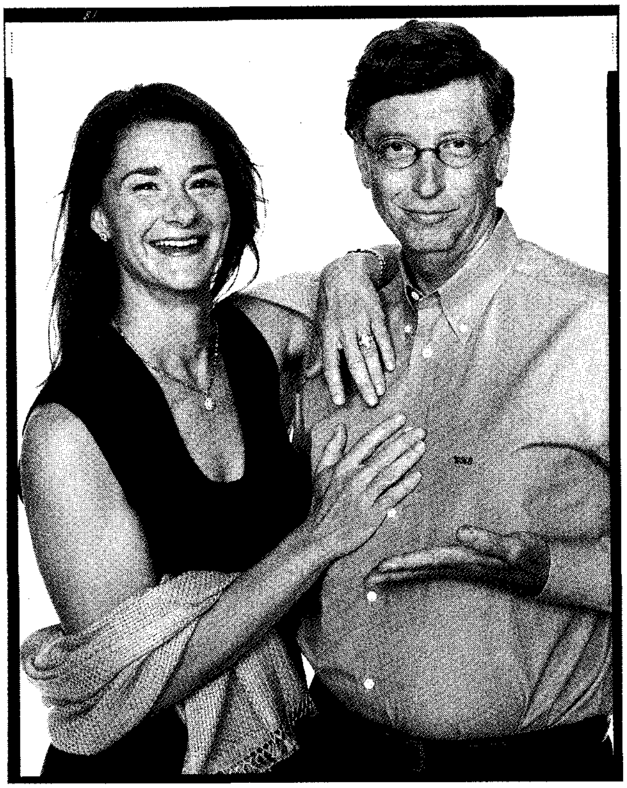

Reginald van der Wealth
2 MILLION JOBS LOST IT'S A START
BUSH
LEAVE NO BILLIONAIRE BEHIND
sh.com
Billionaires for Bush

Members of the activist group Billionaires for Bush (from top left): Robert Mandeltort (accountant), Howard J. Wilk (chemist), Shilpa Narayan (legal assistant), Eileen Appel (former Wall Street executive), Christopher Ditto (writer), Kristine Allen (public-radio program director), Melody Bates (actress), Kurt Opprecht (writer), Avalon Hodges (actress).



Julian Bond, chairman of the board, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Washington, D.C.

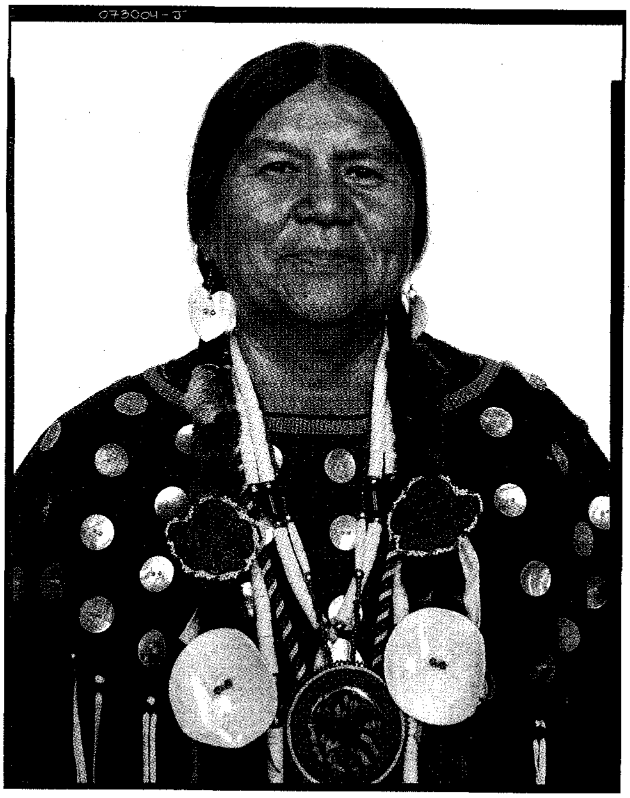


Melinda and Bill Gates, co-founders, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Seattle, Washington.

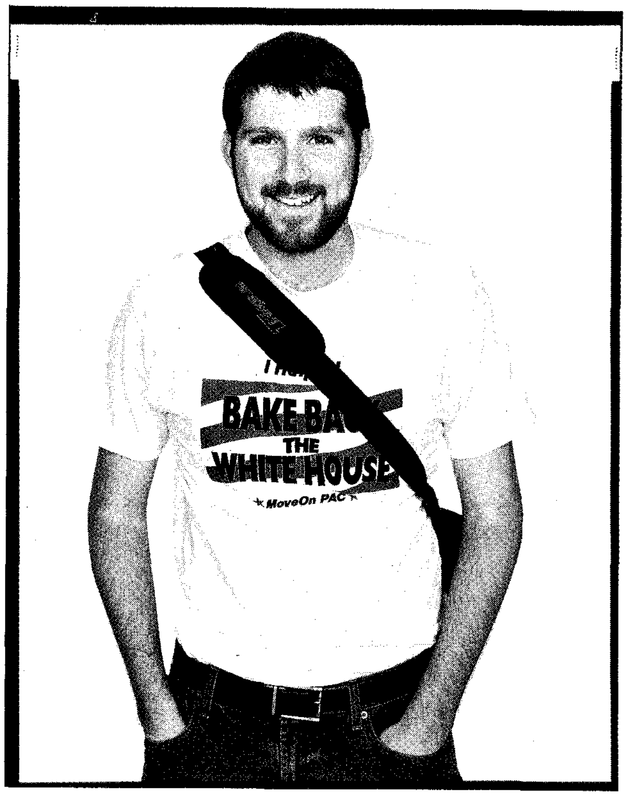
Jamin B. Raskin, professor of constitutional law at American University's law school; director of the school's Program on Law and Government. Washington, D.C.

PATTI COONS
RENSSELAER

Patti Coons, Republican delegate; member, Jasper County Republican Women's Club; member, Indianapolis's Methodist Hospital Task Core. Rensselaer, Indiana.

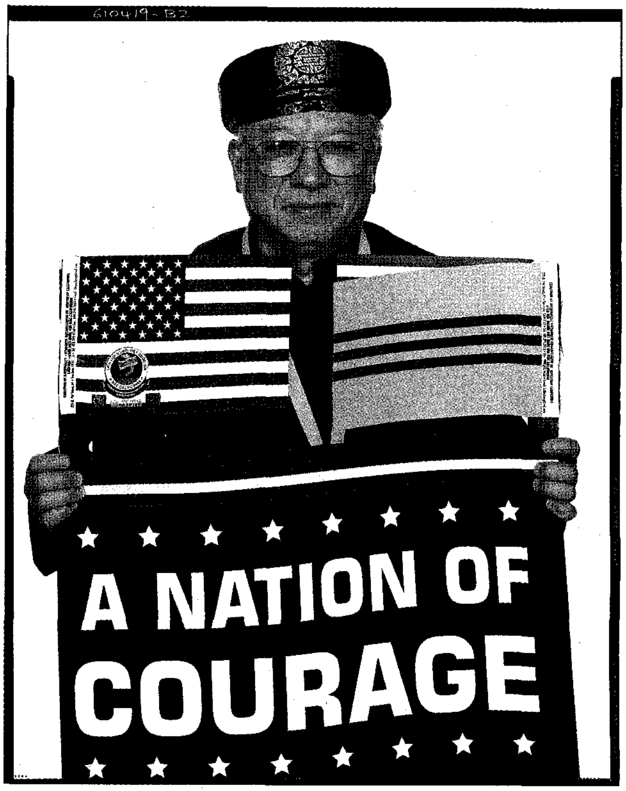


Patsy Whitefoot, Democratic Convention delegate; member, Democratic National Committee Executive Board; educator. White Swan, Washington.

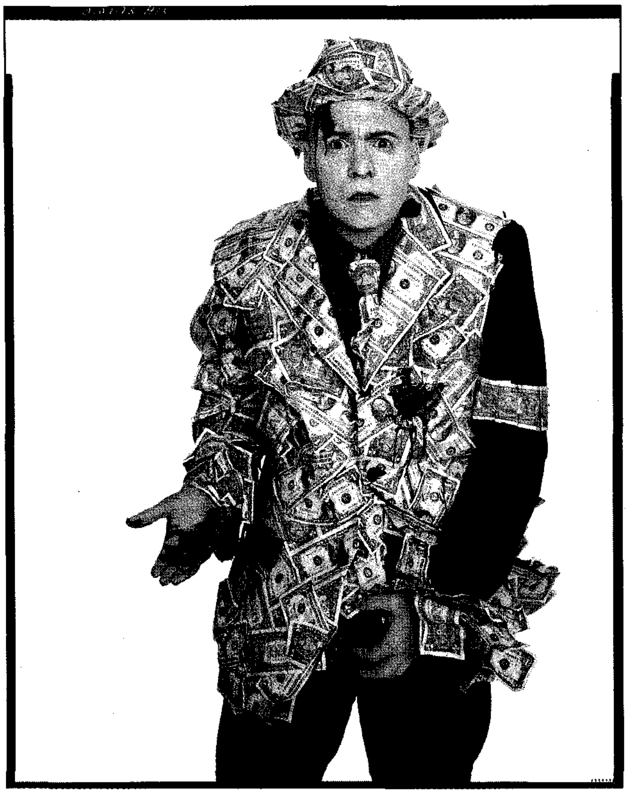


Eli Pariser, executive director, MoveOn PAC; founder, MoveOn's Iraq campaign. New York City.

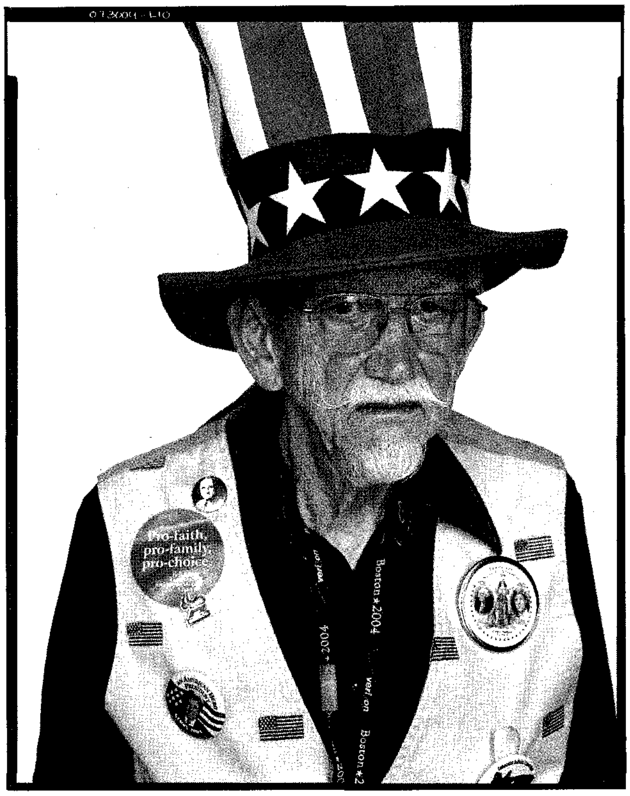
Documentary filmmakers Jehane Noujaim ("Control Room"), Michael Moore ("Fahrenheit 9/11"), and Errol Morris ("The Fog of War").



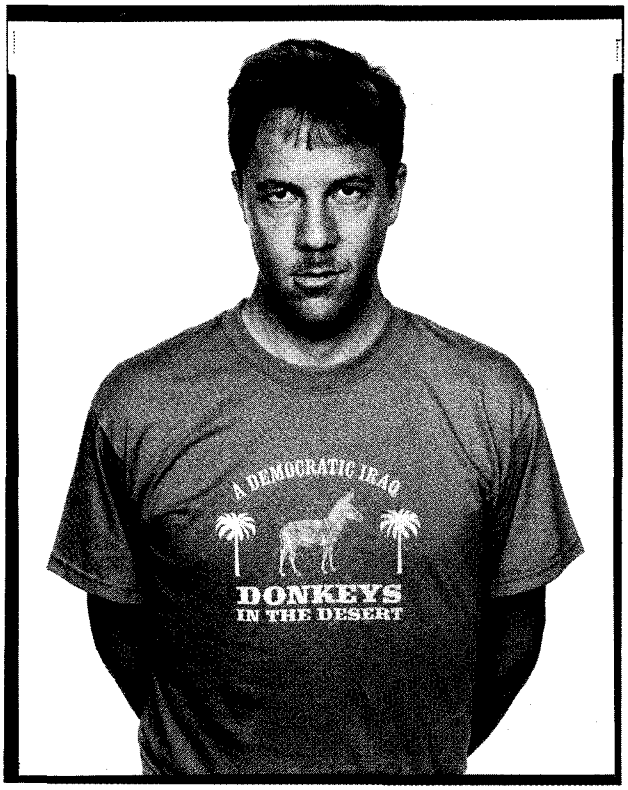
Nhut Ho, delegate to the Republican Convention; insurance agent. San Jose, California.



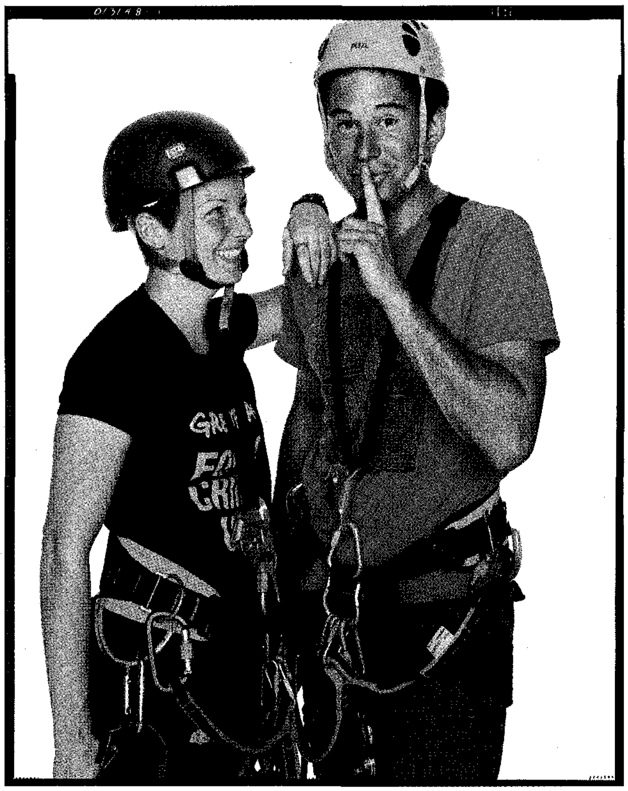
John S. Hall, attorney, poet, activist. New York City.


Pro-faith,
pro-family,
pro-choice
Boston ★ 2004

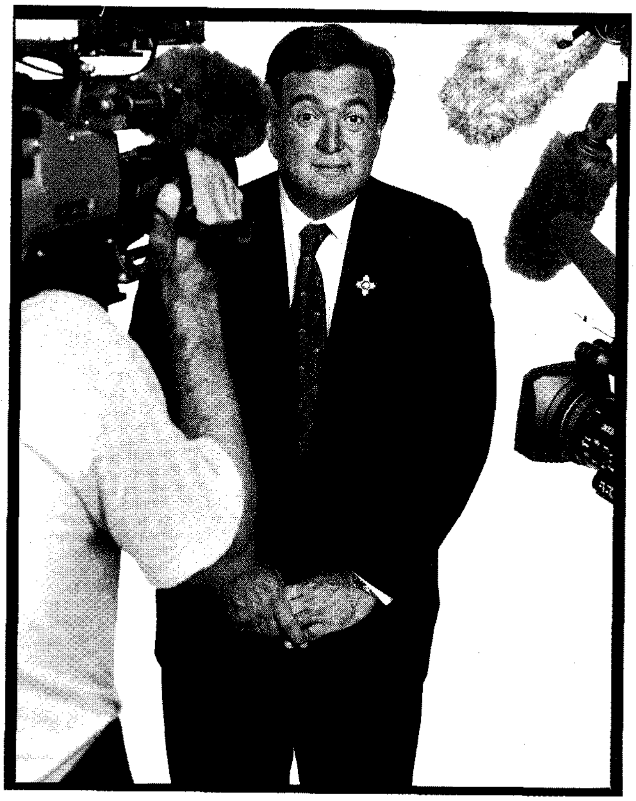
Joe Blanton, delegate to the Democratic Convention; member, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary; member, Douglas County Democratic Executive Board. Scottsburg, Oregon.


A DEMOCRATIC IRAQ
DONKEYS
IN THE DESERT

John Kael Weston, founder, Donkeys in the Desert (Iraq chapter of Democrats Abroad); civilian adviser to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force. Camp Falluja, Iraq.

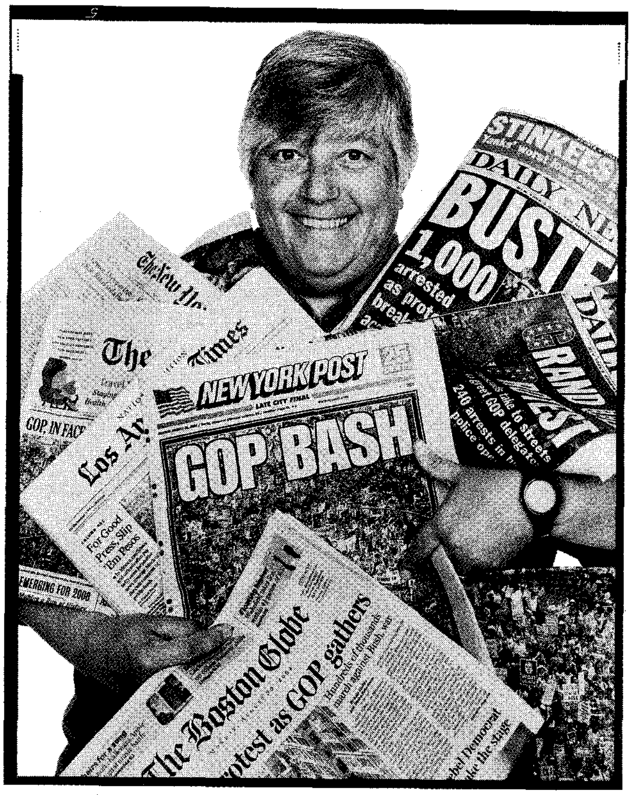


Members of the Greenpeace Forest Rescue Unit: Adrienne Stauffer, climber, research assistant (Washington, D.C.), and Mateo Williford, actions coördinator (San Francisco).

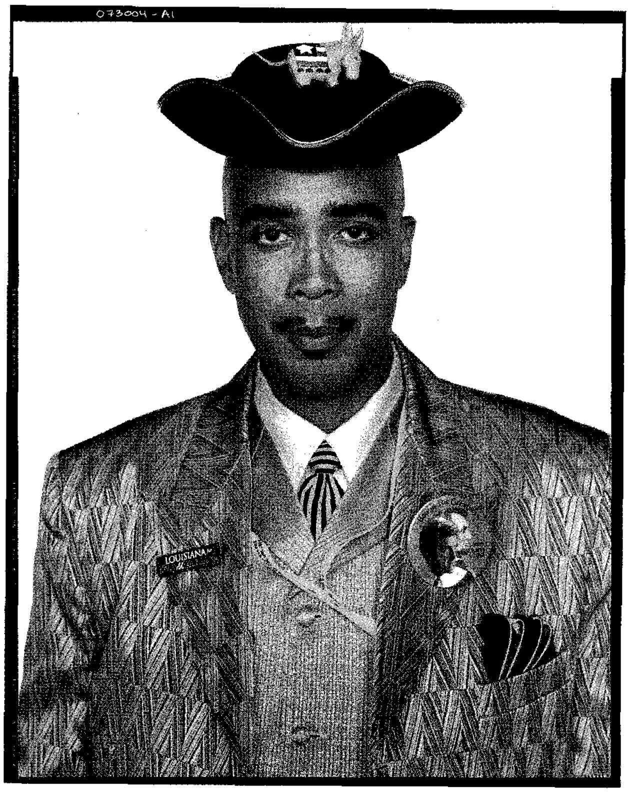


Bill Richardson, governor of New Mexico; chairman, Democratic National Convention. Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Joyce Chang, managing director and global head of Foreign Exchange, Emerging Markets, and Commodities Strategy, J. P. Morgan Chase. New York City.


STINKEES
DAILY NE
BUSTE
1,000 arrested as prot
NEW YORK POST
GOP BASH
The Times
Los An
GOP IN FACT
The Boston Globe
otest as GOP gathers
EMERGING FOR 2008

Leslie Cagan, national coördinator, United for Peace and Justice; coördinator of the largest demonstration on the eve of the Republican Convention. New York City.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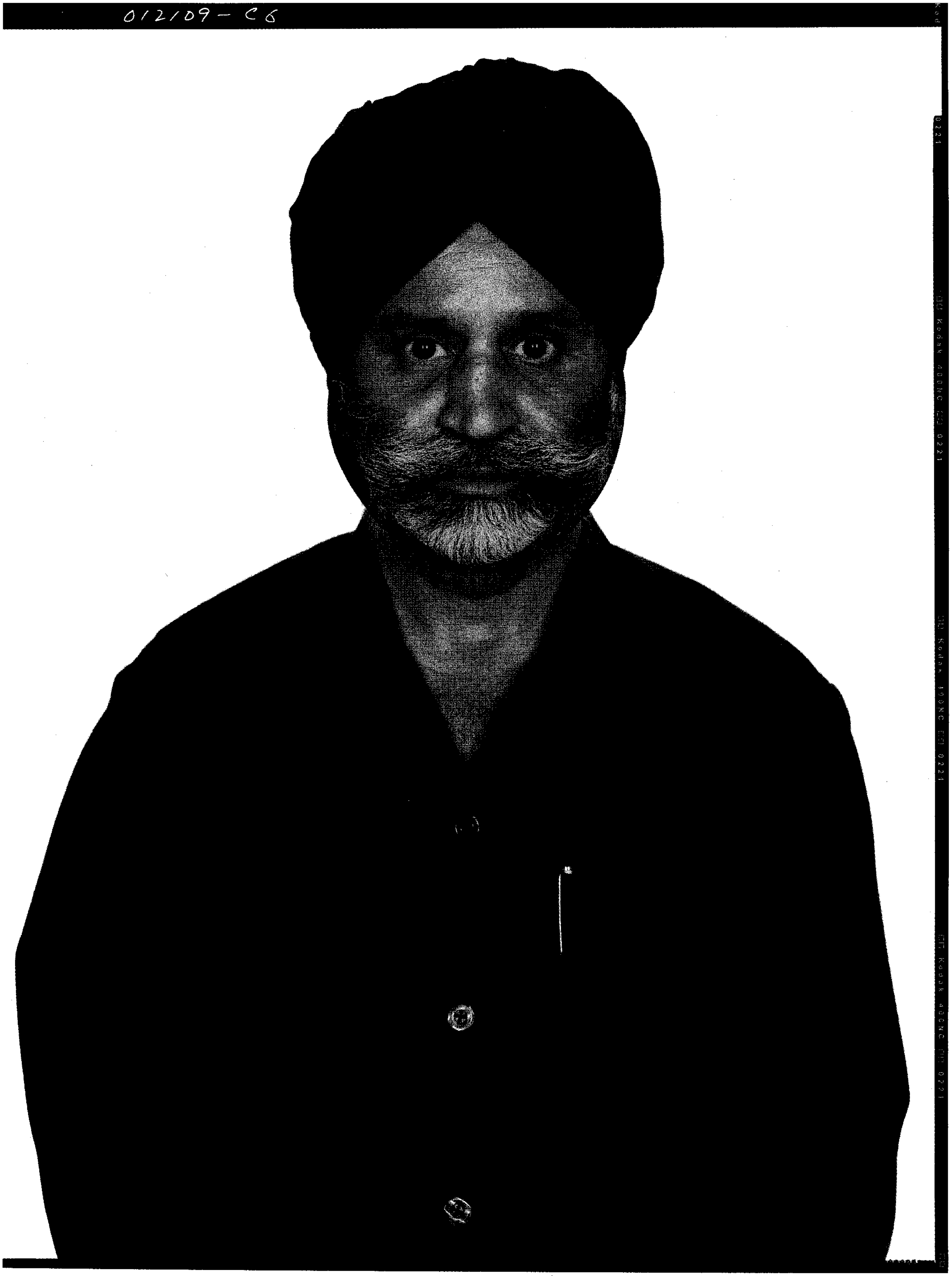
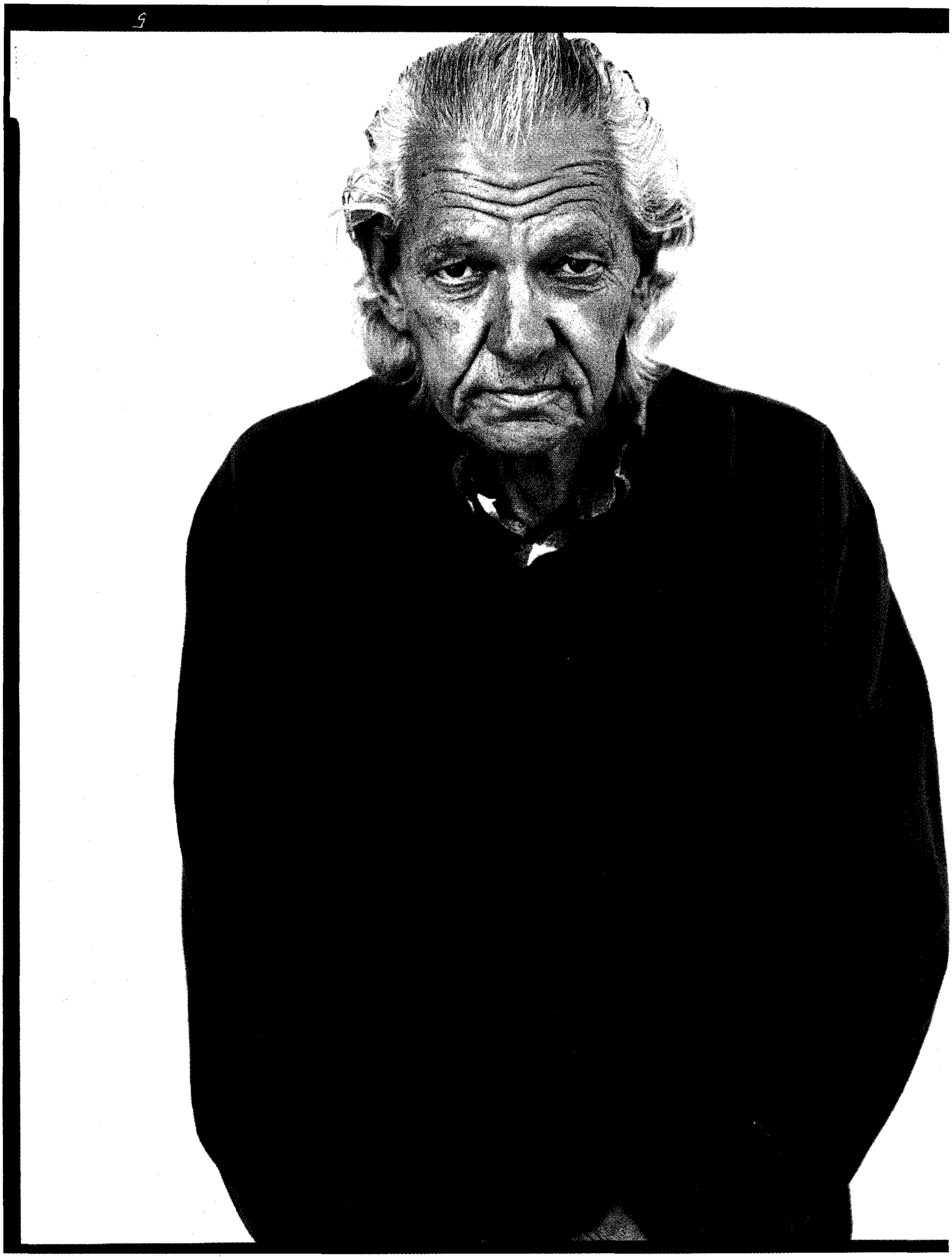
LOUISIANA

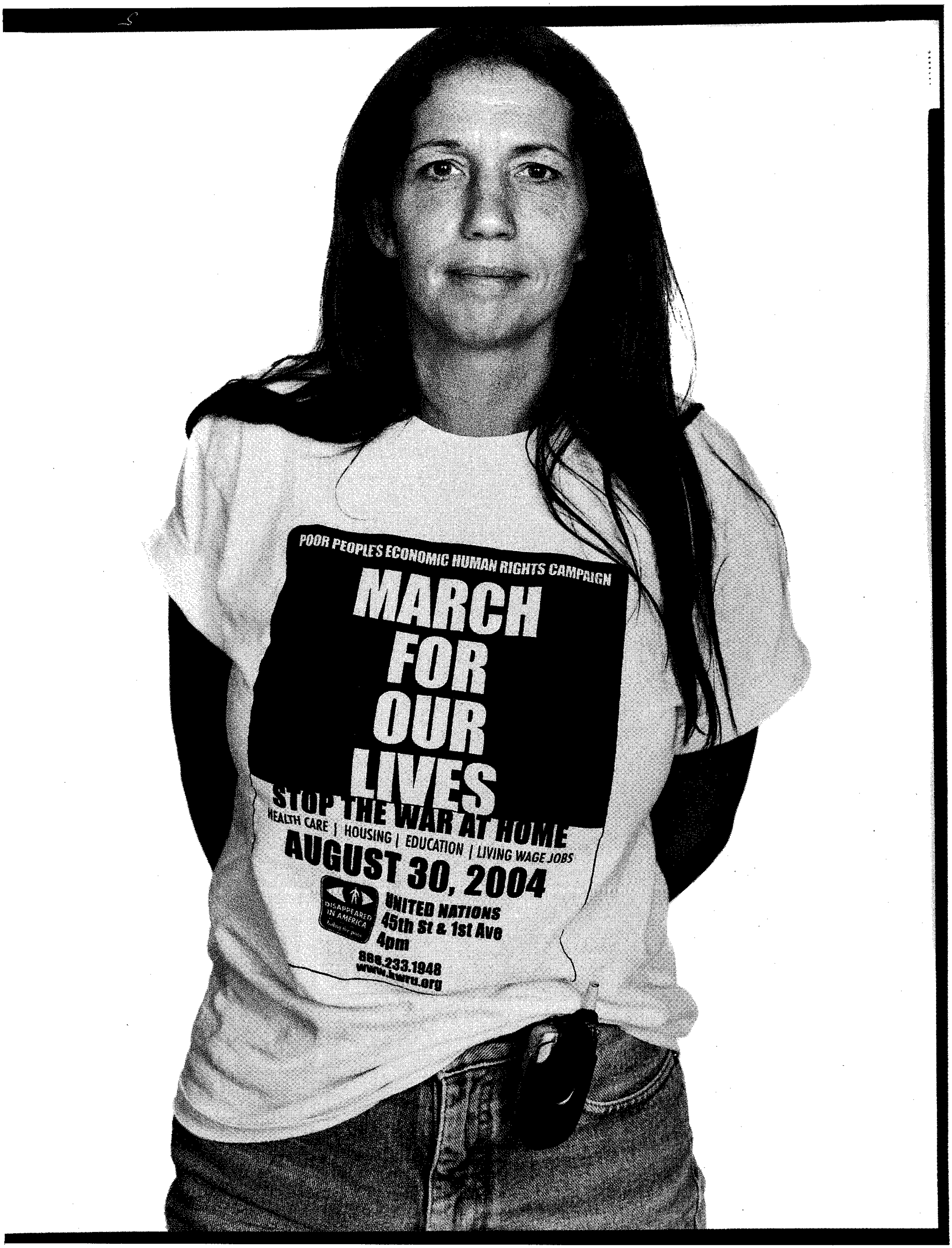
Reverend Rodney McFarland, Sr., special delegate to the Democratic Convention; member, Monroe City School Board of Education; pastor; mortician. Monroe, Louisiana.



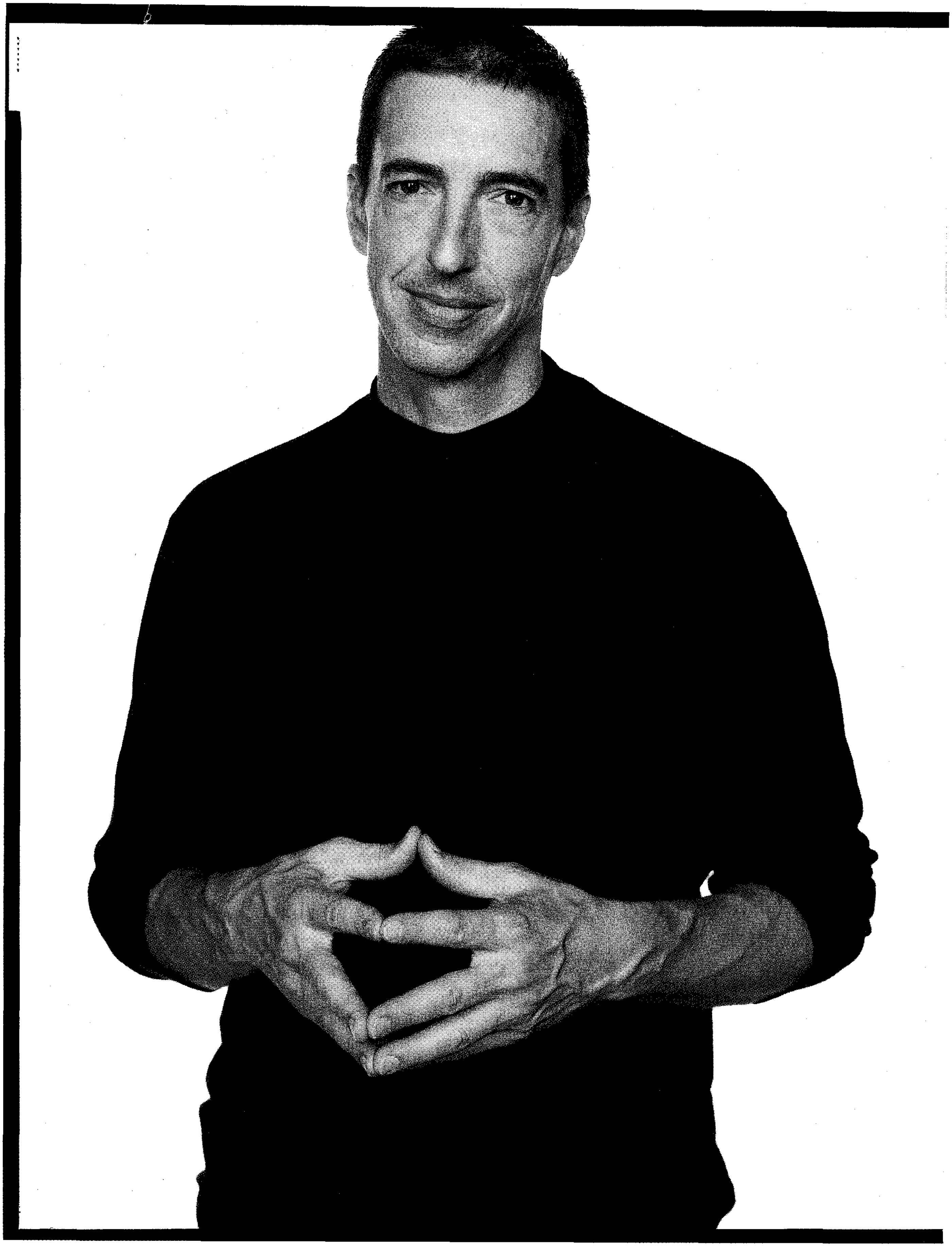
Rajinder Singh Khalsa, Sikh priest; limousine driver; American resident for more than a decade. Queens, New York. On July 11th, he was beaten and left unconscious by a group of men who mocked his turban and told him to go back to his own country.



Ernie Garland, former machinist, resident of Reno-Sparks Gospel Mission. Reno, Nevada.


POOR PEOPLE'S ECONOMIC HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN
MARCH FOR OUR LIVES
STOP THE WAR AT HOME
HEALTH CARE | HOUSING | EDUCATION | LIVING WAGE JOBS
AUGUST 30, 2004
DISAPPEARED IN AMERICA
UNITED NATIONS
45th St & 1st Ave
4pm
888.233.1948
www.kwru.org

Cheri Honkala, founder and national coördinator, Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign; founder, Kensington Welfare Rights Union. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



Ron Reagan, Jr., advocate for stem-cell research; political analyst for MSNBC. Seattle, Washington.

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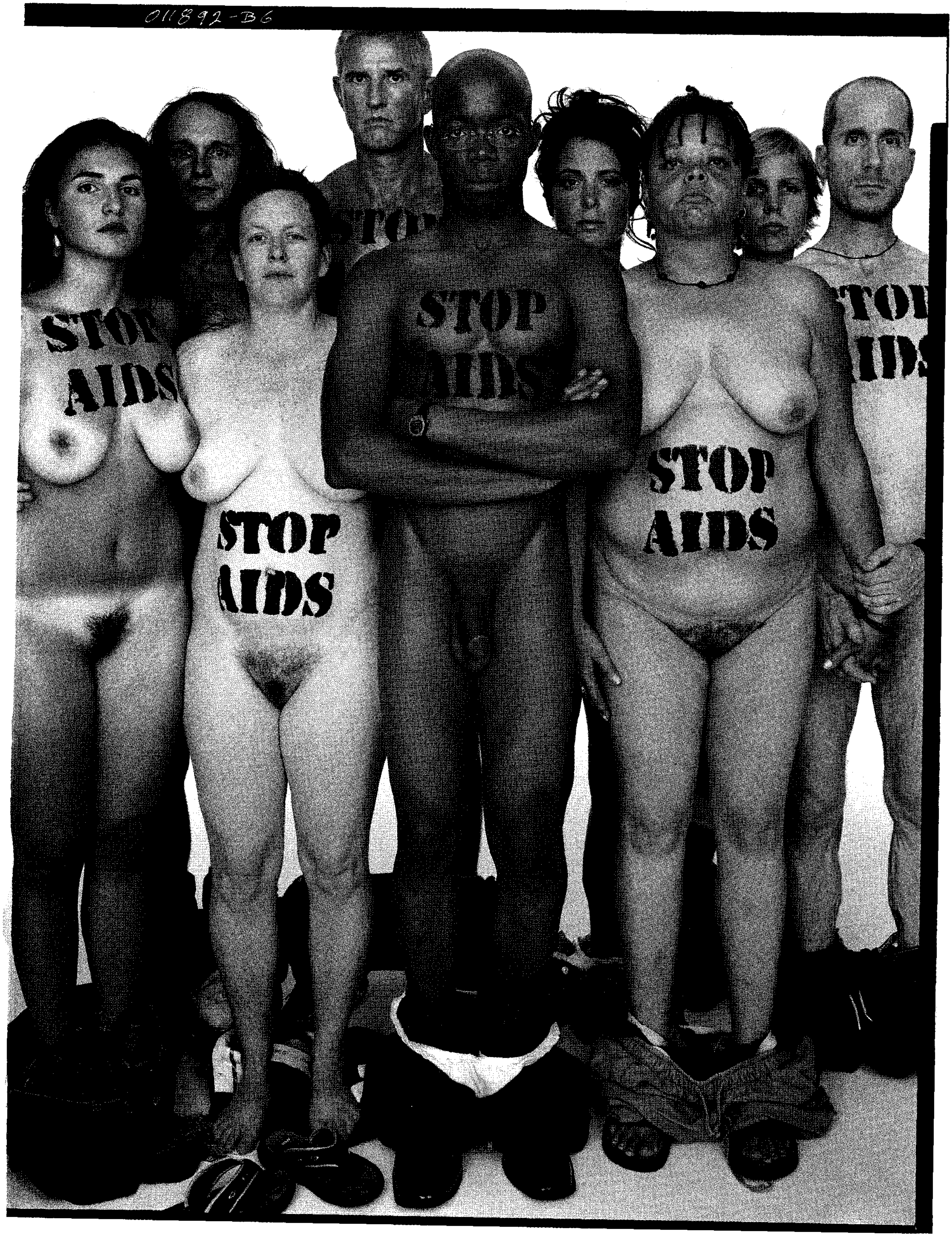
STOP
AIDS
STOP
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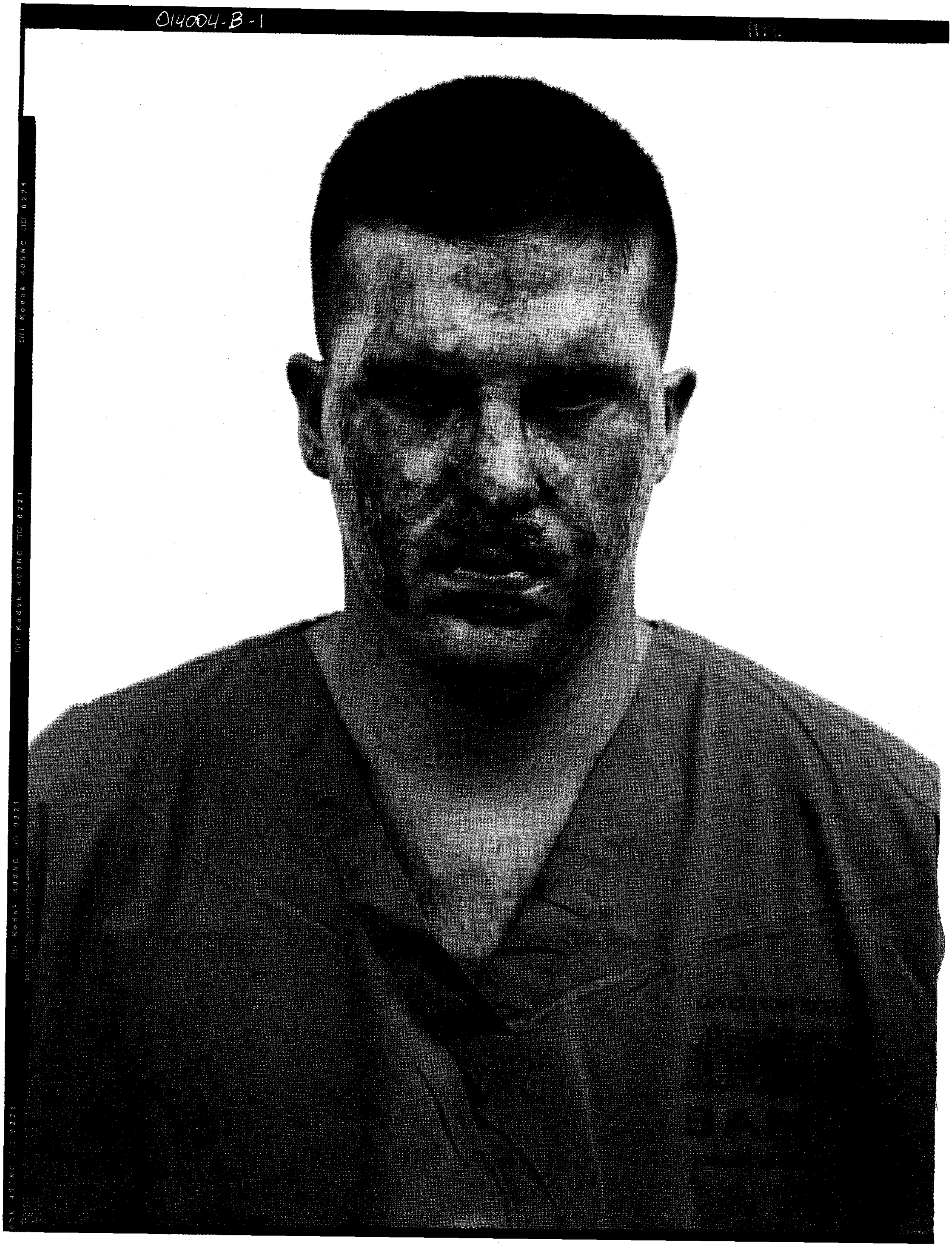
AIDS
STOP
AIDS

Members of the activist group ACT UP, *during the Republican Convention: Minou Arjomand, Paul Davis, Sharon Ann Lynch, Eric Sawyer, Toby Anekwe, Cindra Feuer, Amanda Lugg, Bree Akesson, Perry Souchuk.*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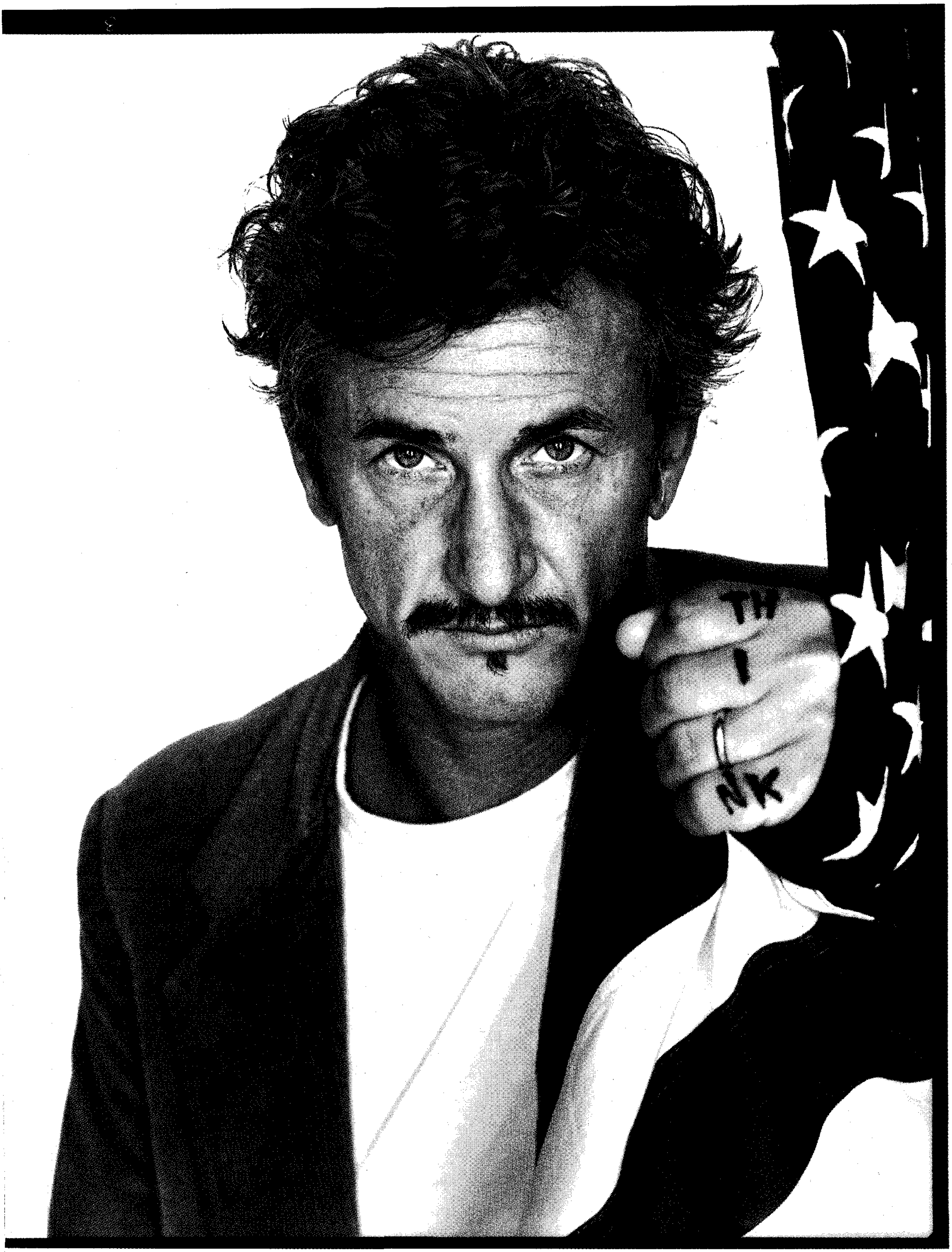
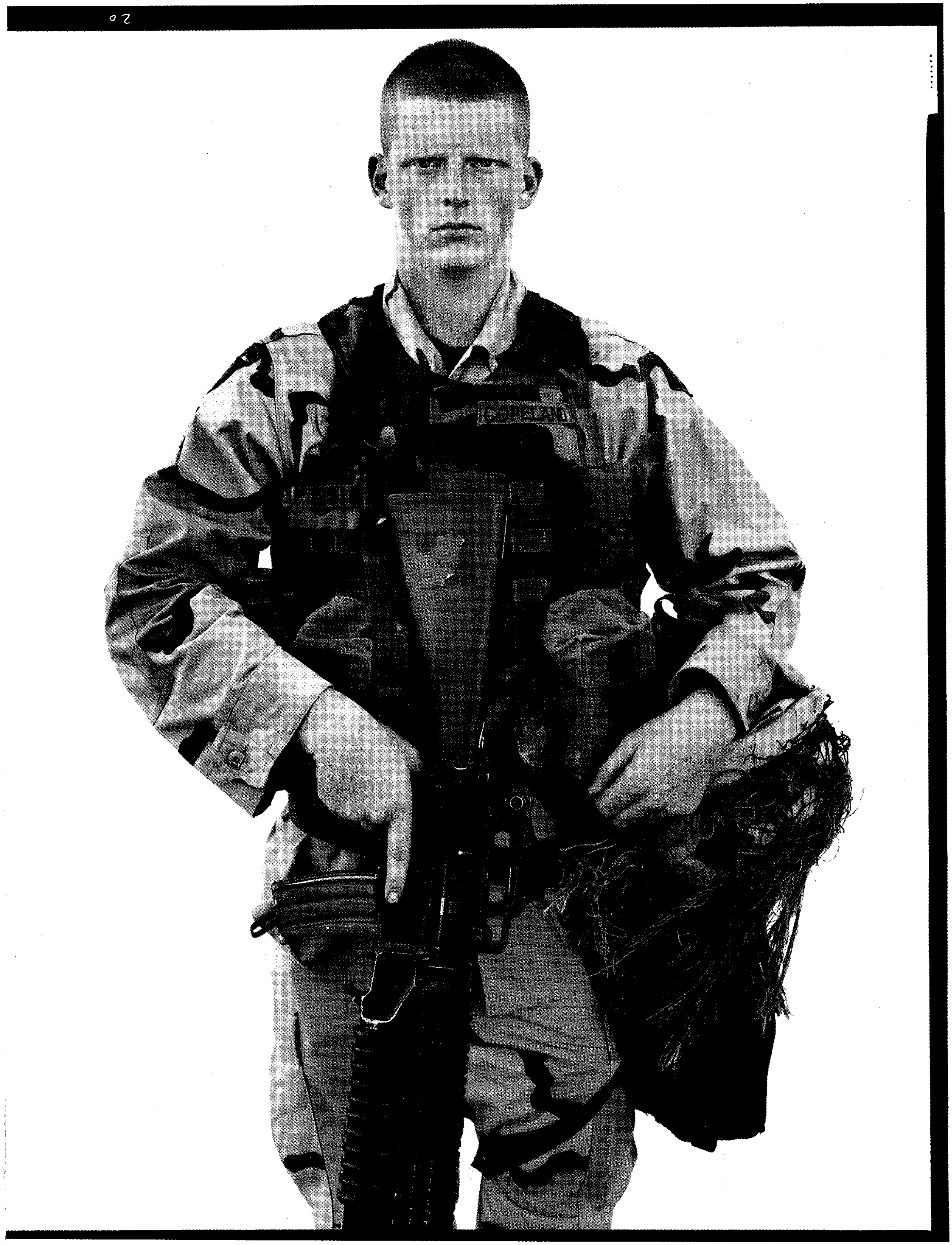
Kodak 400NC 0221

Sergeant Joseph Washam, Burke Army Medical Center, Midlothian, Texas. In April, he suffered third-degree burns over forty per cent of his body when a chemical plant exploded and his Humvee was engulfed in flames, during a mission in Baghdad.

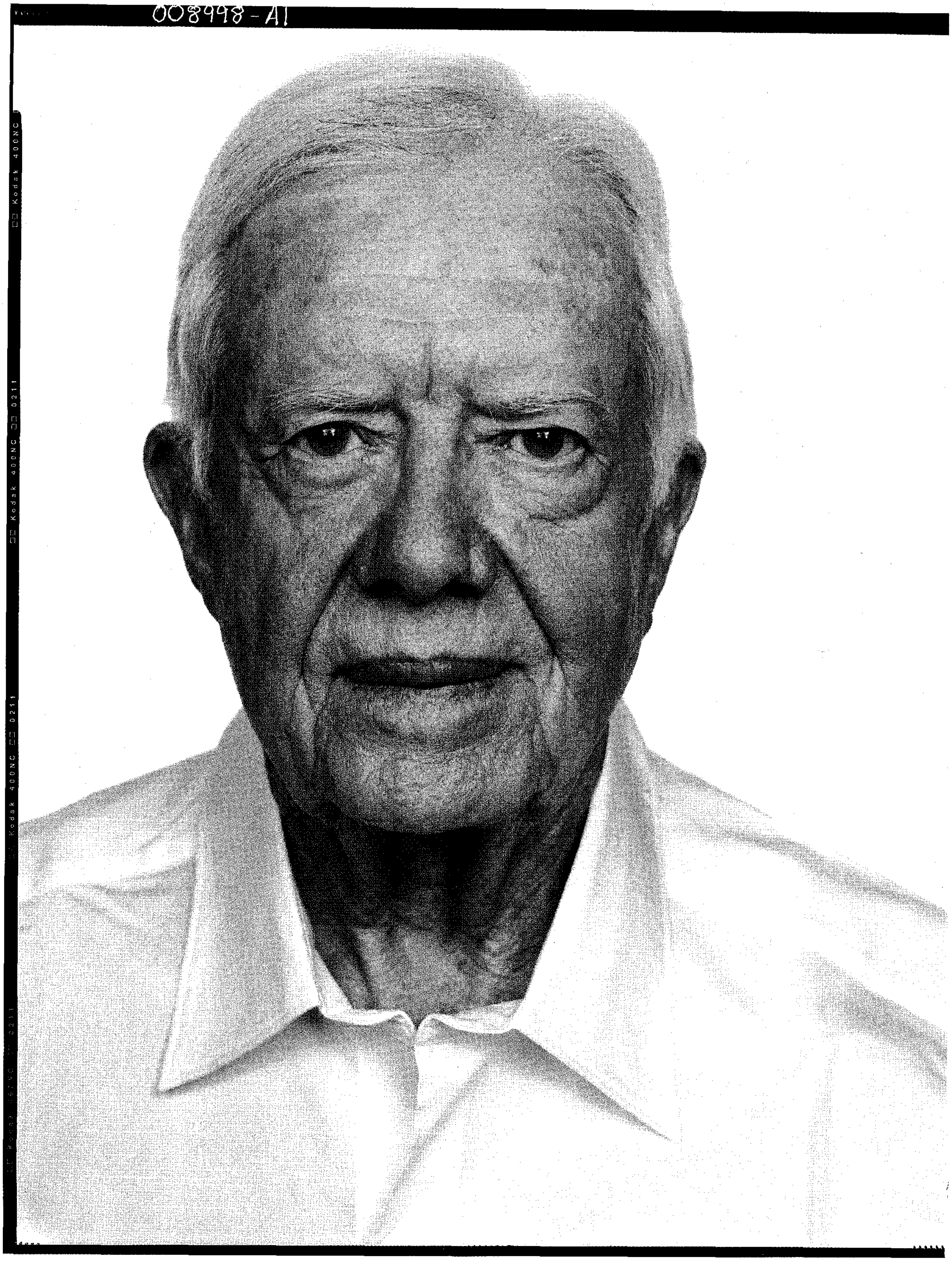


Sean Penn, actor, writer-director. San Francisco, California.

Members of the U.S. Army's 4th Infantry Division, in training at Fort Hood, Texas: Specialist Dustin R. Yount, Specialist Aaron C. Sisk, Specialist John R. Copeland, Private Tucker J. Tracy, Specialist Jason K. Gross, Sergeant Zachary Hailey, Specialist Travis Axline. All but one of them are veterans of the Iraq war.



Specialist John R. Copeland, U.S. Army, in training at Fort Hood, Texas.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Jimmy Carter, former President of the United States; co-founder and chairman, the Carter Center. Atlanta, Georgia.

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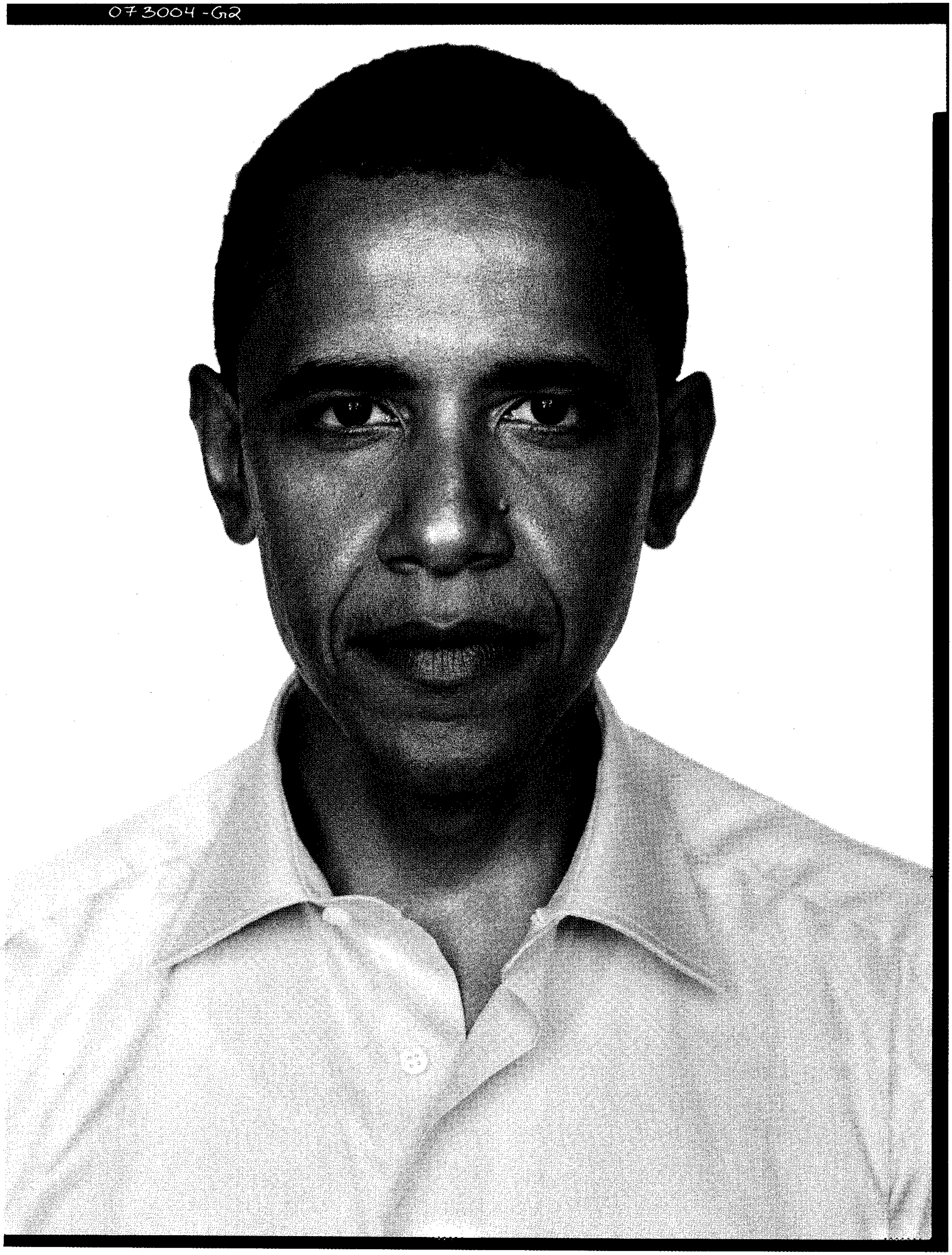

Barack Obama, Illinois state senator, Thirteenth District; candidate for U.S. Senate. Chicago, Illinois.

FICTION

MEMOIRS OF A MUSE

BY LARA VAPNYAR

As a child, I used to think that Dostoyevsky's second wife, Anna Grigorievna, was his muse. I knew her story before I knew anything else about Dostoyevsky, before I'd even read any of his books.

When I was five, my father left my mother and me to marry a tall, square-shouldered woman named Maya. Shortly after that, he died. To my mother and me, it was a kind of double betrayal. Around that time, photographs of the major Russian writers began to line the wall in my mother's room, gradually replacing the pictures of my father pulling a straining fishing rod up out of the water or standing by the shore amid fat, glossy sea lions, looking through binoculars.

I never liked Tolstoy's portrait. He looked like the mean Santa Claus—the one who never brings anything good, who leaves a knitted scarf or a pair of socks under the tree. I believed early on in the two Santas: they were brothers. The good one left pretty boxes filled with dolls, dolls' furniture, or dolls' dishes. The mean one left nothing but clothes that my mother would have bought for me anyway.

I didn't like Chekhov's portrait, either. There was something suspicious about his grin and his pince-nez. He looked as if he knew something that I didn't want him to know. Perhaps he knew about Maya's favorite vase, which I had shattered, carefully disposed of, then pretended not to know anything about. I definitely didn't like Chekhov!

Pushkin . . . Well, Pushkin was O.K. He seemed like a fine guy, but he didn't look serious enough to be a writer.

Dostoyevsky was the one I loved. He had strong hands and a large forehead, so large that it appeared almost to burst through his skin. He had serious eyes, and he looked directly at me, without hiding, without the fake playful expression of other adults. "Dostoyevsky had different eyes," my mother said when she spotted me staring at him. "One brown and one black."

"Different eyes!" I repeated, awestruck, and asked if he had a wife. "He is dead" was the answer. "But he did have a wife, when he was alive. Her name was Anna Grigorievna."

I liked her name. "Was she nice?"

"Oh, yes, she was very nice. She took very good care of him. When he was cold, she'd serve him tea and cover his knees with a plaid blanket."

"I could do that, too!" I said.

I imagined Dostoyevsky sharing a dinner table with my dolls. I knew how to prepare kasha for the dolls, and serve them tea. I would spread a napkin on his lap, feed him my kasha, and give him his tea, and then I would put him to bed. I'd tuck a blanket around him and take his temperature with my toy thermometer, just in case.

Dostoyevsky was fixed in my imagination as a dead writer who had different eyes and a nice wife until I turned ten and my grandmother had a stroke and moved in with us. Then I learned more details about his life.

"Your grandfather's name was Fyodor Mikhaylovich, the same as Dostoyevsky's. Dostoyevsky was crazy, and your grandfather was even crazier!" My grandmother told me this once as I stood cutting her hair.

My only experience cutting hair consisted of chopping off my dolls' coarse ringlets, but my grandmother had been complaining that long hair made her neck itch, and my mother finally decided that I should take care of it. "You're good with your hands," she said. I rarely disagreed with praise that was directed at me, so one day I took the scissors from the drawer, moved a chair to the edge of the bed, and guided my grandmother into it, holding her under the arms. She felt terribly heavy, but she looked weightless. After months in bed, she seemed to have lost almost all material substance. I imagined that she was completely empty inside, her bones rattling in the withered sack of her skin like my wooden building blocks in their canvas bag. I draped a sheet over her shoulders, untied her blue hair band, and combed her hair, trying to avoid touching her scalp. Her skin, though warm, had a corpselike softness about it. I felt that if I pressed against it, my finger would break through into some darkness that reached further than my grandmother's body.

After the stroke, my grandmother's state of mind kept changing from crazy to sane and back, often drifting in a weird transitional condition that I called "medium-crazy." Her mind was almost clear then: she didn't confuse our names, she didn't attempt to wander off or eat soup with a fork. She spent most of her time with an open book on her chest—her favorite book, the diary of Anna Grigorievna Dostoyevskaya. She looked almost normal. Still, something betrayed the sickness of my grandmother's mind to those who knew her well. It was her passion for storytelling, an unhealthy vigor that wouldn't let her rest, that kept her talking in a manic confessional stream, greedy for an audience. My late grandfather, a man who was generally avoided in family conversation, was the main hero of her stories—he, and the other Fyodor Mikhaylovich, Dostoyevsky. Both men emerged as bright and sinister characters.

"Dostoyevsky was a terrible, terrible man," my grandmother said as I reached for the scissors. "How he tortured his poor wife! She was his muse, you know. Without her, he wouldn't have written shit."

"I know her name," I said. "Anna Grigorievna."

"Anna Grigorievna. That's right. Oh, how he tortured her! He would take all their money and gamble it away, and then he would come back for more. But of course there wasn't any, so he'd pawn every good thing she owned, only to gamble the money away again. He gambled away her ring, her earrings, her shawl, and, once, her shoes and her dress, so she couldn't even go shopping."

"What was the point in going shopping if he'd already gambled away all the money?"

"Well, maybe she hoped to ask a nice salesman for credit. Or maybe she just wanted to window-shop," my grandmother said. "And, when he came back, instead of saying he was sorry he yelled at her for not fixing his supper on time!"

"Did Anna Grigorievna yell back at him?"

"Never! She apologized for not having supper ready. You see, she was a very good wife."

"All right, now shut your eyes."

I let her long bangs fall down her forehead and snapped the scissors above her eyebrows, careful not to nick the skin. It was easier to look at my grandmother when her eyes were closed. She

FILIP PAGOWSKI

seemed smoother, more alive, almost normal.

"You know what, Ba?" I said. "Dostoyevsky was a genius. Geniuses are a crazy lot."

One sly, glistening eye opened under my cutting hand.

"They are! They are! They're all crazy as hell!" she said. "You never know how to please them. You think that you do. You keep track of the things that please them. But they're fickle—they change their likings on a whim. You serve them tea with sugar and cream—their favorite, and you've gone out specially to buy that cream—and then they yell that they wanted coffee with lemon. You want to throw that tea into their ugly red mug and then smash the cup on their head, but you don't do it. You apologize. And then when they come home drunk and in soiled pants—yes, they do that, they soil their pants—you don't kick them out! You take them in, you undress them, you scrape the shit off them, and you put them to bed. And after that you go to the communal bathroom to wash their pants. It's not an easy thing, I tell you, to wash shitty pants in a communal bathroom with all the neighbors watching and yelling at you because of the stench! But you do it for them all the same."

She couldn't possibly be talking about Dostoyevsky, could she?

"Do it for whom, Ba?" I asked. "Who soils their pants?"

Both eyes opened like nimble animals, lurking beneath the hair.

"Them! Them! The geniuses!"

The tirade had left her out of breath. She closed her eyes, hung her head, and sat quietly without moving—a convenient position for chopping the hair on her crown. I finished the job in silence, careful to make the layers even. Yet, at some point, my ten-year-old overconfidence let me down. By the end of the session, my grandmother's hair was circling her head in all directions. I tried to even it out but wound up cutting too close to the skin. By the time my grandmother finally raised her head and opened her eyes, there was nothing but yellow-white down fluttering on her bare scalp. With her beaky nose and her neck thinned by illness, she looked like a baby chick. A sick baby chick. An old and sick baby chick, if such a thing is possible. My grandmother moved her head from side to side, then shook it. "Nice and cool," she said.

My grandmother died shortly after I turned fifteen, leaving behind an empty bed and the cluster of boxes into which my mother put her belongings after the funeral—clothes in a big box, documents in a small one, and everything else in a medium-sized one. A heavy, nauseating sensation—the closeness of death—pervaded the apartment long after my grandmother's body had been taken away. Sometimes when I lay in bed trying to sleep I could almost hear her moaning on the other side of the wall, complaining, calling for help. Then I'd dive under the blanket and bury my head under my pillow.

At other times, I would hear very real moans, coming from the direction of the staircase and the next-door neighbor's daughter. The neighbor's girl was just two years older than me, but she led a very different life. Independent. Unsheltered. Tough. She worked as an apprentice in the supermarket, and bought her own clothes and makeup with the money she earned. "Get lost, you moron," she yelled at her father, exactly the way her mother did. "Shut up, you bitch," she yelled at her mother when they argued. They argued like equals, not in the whiny way I argued with my mother when she accused me of something. The neighbor girl looked nothing like me, either. She looked thirty, as my mother commented. I looked twelve. Probably even less than that. "Tanya has preschool boobs," the girls at school whispered behind my back.

For a year, every Wednesday and Friday at about ten or eleven at night, the neighbor girl came home with a boy. As soon as I heard the bang of the elevator opening on our floor, I hurried into the hallway and pressed my face to the peephole in the cold wood of our door. There she was—sailing out of the elevator, her eyes half closed, her winter coat unbuttoned, the boy's body pressed to her behind. They moved to the staircase and leaned against the railing. I never saw the boy's face, only his large red hands fumbling across her chest, struggling with the layers of fabric—the fur of her coat, the wool of her cardigan, the cotton of her blouse, the satin of her bra. I saw her flushed face and her parted lips, which

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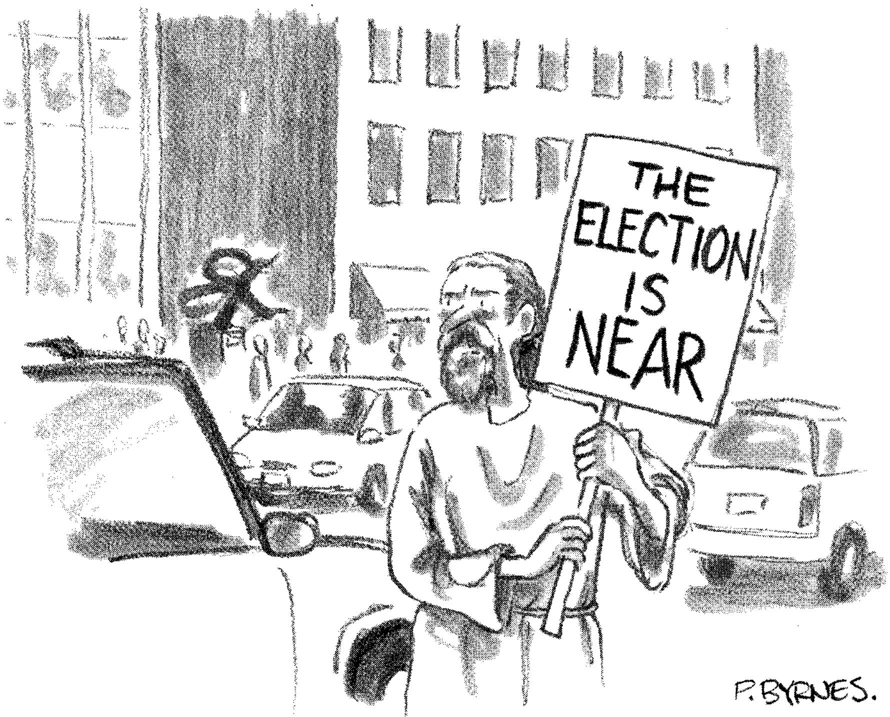

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she licked from time to time. I heard their panting and their coarse voices. His chanting "Where are they? Where are they? Here they are! Here they are!" and her moaning "Shut up, you moron" in a tone utterly different from the one she used with her father.

When I went back to bed, I slipped my hand under the blanket. I didn't fantasize about the neighbor girl and her boyfriend. On the contrary, as soon as I got into bed I found the image of them repulsive. I fantasized, instead, about the dead writers, whose solemn faces lined the greasy pages of my schoolbooks. Gogol, Chekhov, Turgenev. Dostoyevsky. Graying hair, prominent foreheads, knowing eyes. At times, the face of my writer suddenly turned into the face of one of the men I knew, and I'd put an end to my fantasy immediately. It was too weird, too shameful, to imagine how I would react the next time I saw that man. It was safer to stick with the dead.

A dead writer would materialize in my room in his shabby—for some reason, I always imagined them shabby—nineteenth-century clothes and sit down on the edge of my bed with an expression so serious and so kind that it made me want to cry. He would gently sit me up, supporting my back with his hand, and press my hand to his chest. He would stroke my hair and my back and then unbutton my pajama top, slowly, button by button, whispering gentle words. Soon I was completely naked, with a fully clothed dead writer in my bed (I didn't find the idea of a naked dead writer appealing), waiting for something wonderful to happen.

After it was all over, the dead writer left my bed and my room, going back to the safe confinement of my textbooks. This kind of sex certainly wasn't enough to make life worthwhile. Yet there was a promise in it; a glimpse of something bigger lurking in the shadow of puckered fingers and unbuttoned blouses.

We started studying Dostoyevsky in the tenth grade. The teacher announced that before we began reading his works she wanted us to prepare reports on various aspects of his biography. I picked "The later years: the marriage to Anna Grigorievna." When I went home that afternoon, I raided the boxes that held my grandmother's things. In the medium-sized one, buried under faded postcards, pairs of broken reading glasses, and bottles of unused, expired medicine, I found a small, dishevelled book: Anna Grigorievna's diary.

I brushed the dust off the cover, and slumped on the couch with a sigh of an-

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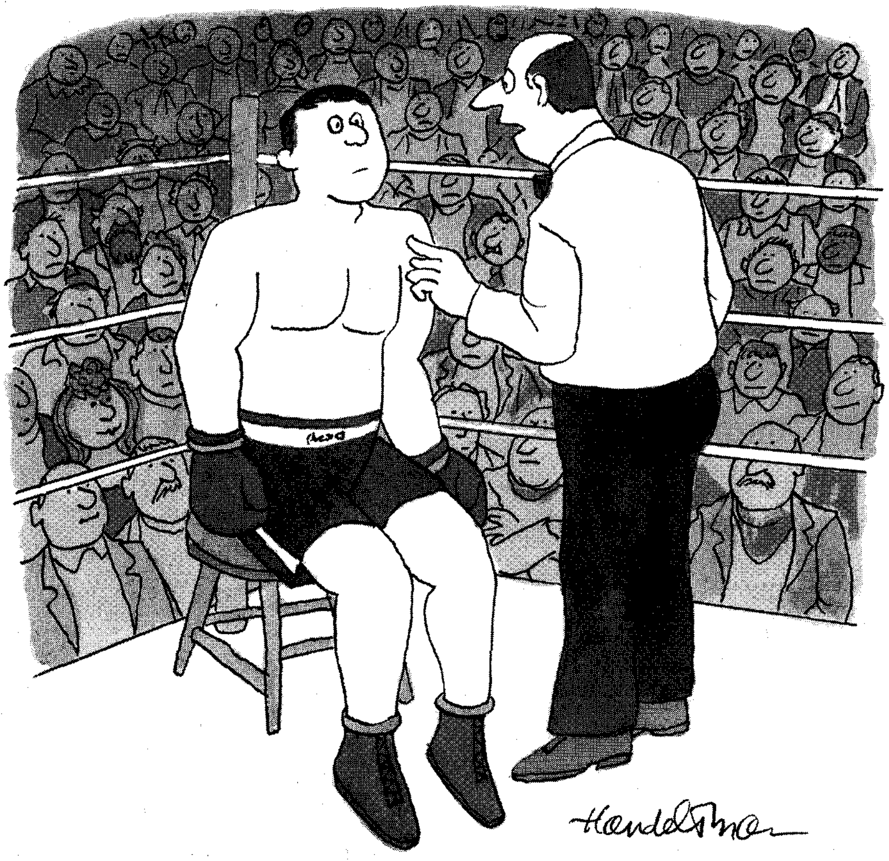
ticipation. After all these years, I was returning to the writer with different eyes; I was about to discover what it was like to be his muse. But as soon as I had read the first couple of pages I knew something was wrong, very wrong, either with me or with the book, and I couldn't understand what it was. Here she was: Anna Grigorievna Snitkina, a young stenographer, fresh from school, by lucky chance assigned to work for Fyodor Dostoyevsky. He needed a stenographer because he was in a hurry to finish a novel (some contractual obligation—I skipped the boring parts). They arranged that he would dictate and she would write shorthand and then later transcribe what she had written. They worked like that for some time, became attached to each other, and one day he proposed and she accepted. I stopped reading and went back to the beginning of the book.

When Anna Grigorievna went to see Dostoyevsky for the first time, she brought with her a stenographer's notebook and a supply of sharpened pencils of the best quality. She described in minute detail her trip to the stationery store to buy those pencils—*she wanted to impress him with her pencils*? Liar! Liar! She didn't even mention how much time she'd spent fixing her hair or choosing her clothes! I smacked the book against the couch with the force of a sixteen-year-old's disgust, but I didn't put it down. I read on, my imagination supplying the details that Anna Grigorievna had omitted.

She sat bending over her work. She didn't raise her eyes, but she felt his presence. He was pacing back and forth, back and forth. The folds of his coat brushed against her back from time to time; his heavy feet made the floorboards creak. He sighed. He groaned. He murmured some unintelligible sounds. He looked at her—first without realizing that he was looking at her, but gradually becoming more and more aware of her. He stared at her delicate girlish neck. He took in the shape of her back, the color of her hair, the quick, firm movements of her hand, as he wove and spun the intricate patterns of his sentences.

I found it hard to breathe. Yes, "the other woman," along with the man, had been dead for almost a hundred years, but that didn't make my jealousy any less real or less painful. I hated Anna Grigorievna. I hated her guts. I choked with



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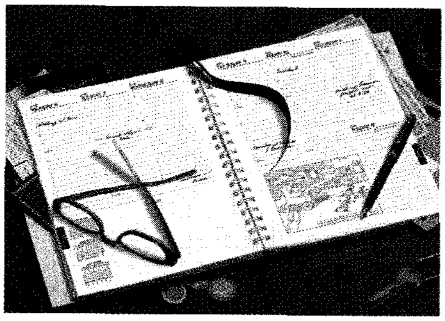

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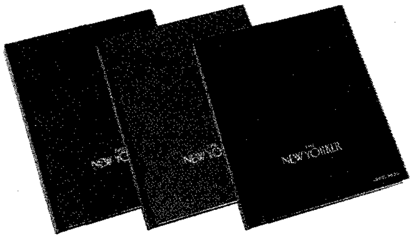

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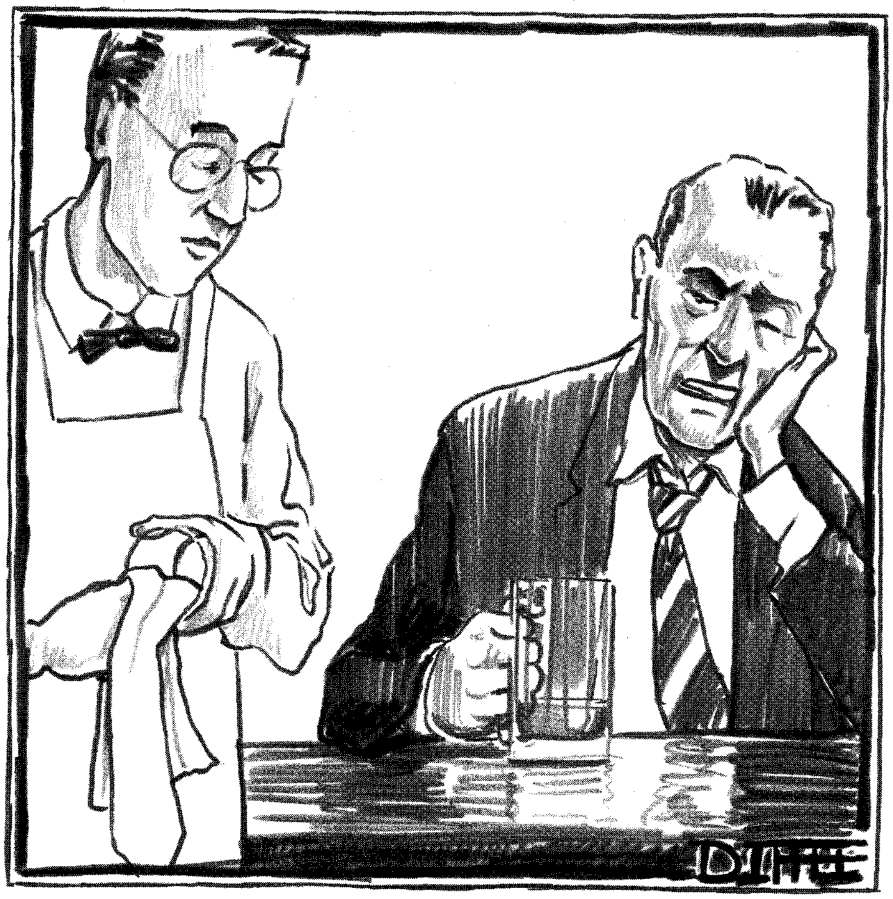

"I feel like a man trapped in a woman's salary."

• •

rage when she described how Dostoyevsky had called her affectionate names, bought her fruit and sweets, and declared his love on his knees (usually after he had gambled away yet another sum of money—but I was too flustered to notice those details at the time). Whenever I read that he had yelled at her or ignored her, I was filled with the sweetest joy.

I wasn't comforted by the discovery that she was an average girl, not particularly pretty, not particularly smart, unremarkable in every way, practical, even petty. As ordinary as Anna Grigorievna was, she had the man of my dreams, and she was his muse. It was she who had inspired Dostoyevsky to write what my textbook called "the pearls of world literature."

Dostoyevsky dictated to her. But she was the one who actually wrote "The Gambler." Her hand touched the paper, the movements of her fingers transformed the short-lived sounds into eternal words. Her eyes were the first to see the words he had uttered. And it was her work that enabled others to see them. Wasn't she, then, even more than a muse?

It was unbearable. I shoved Anna Grigorievna's diary under my mother's sofa, where, years before, I had hidden my uncle's scary "Atlas of Dermatology." I had to read "The Gambler" now, the novel that she had written. I had to read it, even though it might be painful.

I found it on the upper bookshelf, a thin book with a faded blue cover. I started reading right there, standing on a chair, my feet sinking into the plush upholstery. After a few pages I stepped down, dragged my feet across the room, and cautiously lowered myself onto the couch, never taking my eyes from the book. I soaked up every word, getting progressively drunker. Something about the book made me feel almost euphoric, but I couldn't put a finger on what it was. It was bigger, more important, more exciting than the characters or the plot—it was something that existed beyond the book's pages.

In the middle of Chapter 6, it hit me. There was another woman! A real woman, who had given life to the character Polina, and to the novel itself: *she* was Dostoyevsky's muse. Dostoyevsky had had a relationship with her before he met his zealous stenographer, Anna Grigorievna. And it was that other woman whom he had really loved. The magnitude of the passion in the novel was so great that even I, who was unfamiliar with anything remotely close to love, could recognize it. I read one passage again and again:

> What there is so attractive about her I cannot think. Yet there is something attractive about her—something passing fair, it would seem. Others besides myself she has driven to distraction. She is tall and straight, and very slim. Her body looks as though it could be tied into a knot, or bent double, like a cord. The imprint of her foot is long and narrow. It is a maddening imprint—yes, simply a maddening one! And her hair has a reddish tint about it, and her eyes are like cat's eyes—though able also to glance with proud, disdainful mien.

The maddening imprint of her foot—that expression moved me so much that I dropped the book and fell face down onto the couch, laughing happily, as if I myself had driven a man like Dostoyevsky to distraction. I didn't resemble Polina at all. I wasn't tall, I wasn't a redhead, I didn't have cat's eyes, I wasn't proud, or cruel, or disdainful—there wasn't one single trait in Dostoyevsky's description that I could call mine. But Polina was different from the detested Anna Grigorievna, and that enabled me to identify with her. I allowed Dostoyevsky to be in love with her. I blessed their love.

I imagined Anna Grigorievna sitting at his desk with her perfect pencils, transcribing the frenzied world of his novels, where there was no place for her. That world was dominated by Polina, who wouldn't serve him tea, offer him a plaid blanket, kiss him on his bald crown, or take shorthand, but who, instead, had the power to ignite him with the imprint of her foot, torture him, drive him mad.

When I am a muse, I will be Polina, I decided. Never, never will I become Anna Grigorievna. ♦

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Its canyons, every rock with eyes, east to west, with every step.
I say he was like you – alive – when with the dead, he climbed the mounts –
Light just like you – thin-boned, high-templed – soldier not, not meant to last,
To linger – with the same deep-opened eyes overflowing face.
He climbed the mounts of corpses, pressing with soles, no, not the soil –
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And smoke – the souls exploding out of tortured bodies – each man like
A torch. He climbed the mounts of corpses – lined up, foe clashed with foe –
Not wrestling anymore, but resting, like lovers, in embrace,
With legs and arms entwined, and not embarrassed if one's head lies at
Another's groin. He climbed the mounts of corpses, stepping on necks, chests,
Not just on toes, but on brown eyes like yours, blue like mine, on hands.
He pressed his soles on cheeks, on foreheads. He smashed lips, ears. He crushed
The mutilated faces even more, like those who press red wine
With feet. He climbed the mounts of corpses – not just deafened, blind, but drunk,
Not soles – eyes soaked with blood, as if his heart pumped out of him his blood,
Till shrapnel hurled him down to blend him with shredded bones, squashed eyes.

–Irene Caesar

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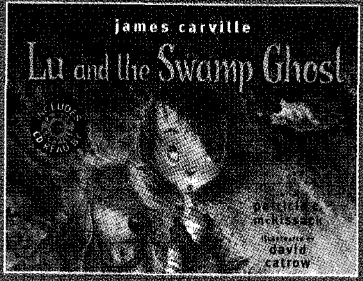

In Lu and the Swamp Ghost, political consultant and best-selling author James Carville teams up with award-winning children's book author Patricia C. McKissack to create a story about lending a helping hand–based on an episode in the life of Carville's mother, Lucille (known as "Miz Nippy"), who grew up in rural southern Louisiana during the Great Depression.

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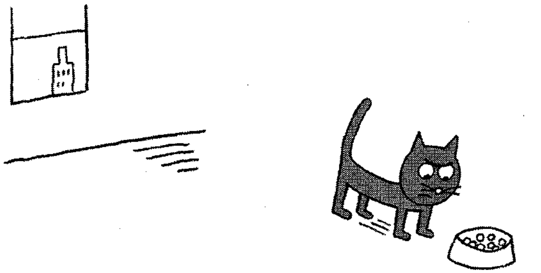


BOOKS

THE GREAT I AM

Robert Alter's new translation of the Pentateuch.

BY JOHN UPDIKE

In this age of widespread education and flagging creativity, new translations abound. The old standbys who nurtured our youth—Constance Garnett rendering the Russians, C. K. Scott Moncrieff putting his spin on Proust, the Muirs translating Kafka, H. T. Lowe-Porter doing Thomas Mann—are all being retired, with condescending remarks about their slips and elisions, by successors whose more modern versions infallibly miss, it seems to this possibly crotchety scanner, the tone, the voice, the presence of the text that we first read. In general—if it's generalizations you want—the closer the translator is in age to the translated, the more closely shared their vision and style will be. The Modern Library chose to reprint the 1700-03 translation of "Don Quixote" by Peter Motteux; after that peppery stew of italicized names and apostrophe-bedeck'd past tenses, every other "Quixote" feels watered down.

Of all translations into English, the one most read and universally admired is, of course, the King James Bible (1611), our language's lone masterpiece produced by committee, at least until this year's "9/11 Commission Report." Nevertheless, new translations of the Bible—the world's best-seller, long out of copyright—tumble forth, for the reasons, if any are offered, that contemporary scholarship presents a superior understanding of ancient Hebrew and that Renaissance English is increasingly, inconveniently archaic. The Hebrew scholar and literary critic Robert Alter, in introducing his thousand-page version, with copious commentary, of the first five books of the Bible—commonly called the Pentateuch or Torah—under the title "The Five Books of Moses" (Norton; $39.95), writes:

> Broadly speaking, one may say that in the case of the modern versions, the problem is a shaky sense of English and in the case of the King James Version, a shaky sense of Hebrew. The present translation is an experiment in re-presenting the Bible—and, above all, biblical narrative prose—in a language that conveys with some precision the semantic nuances and the lively orchestration of literary effects of the Hebrew and at the same time has stylistic and rhythmic integrity as literary English.

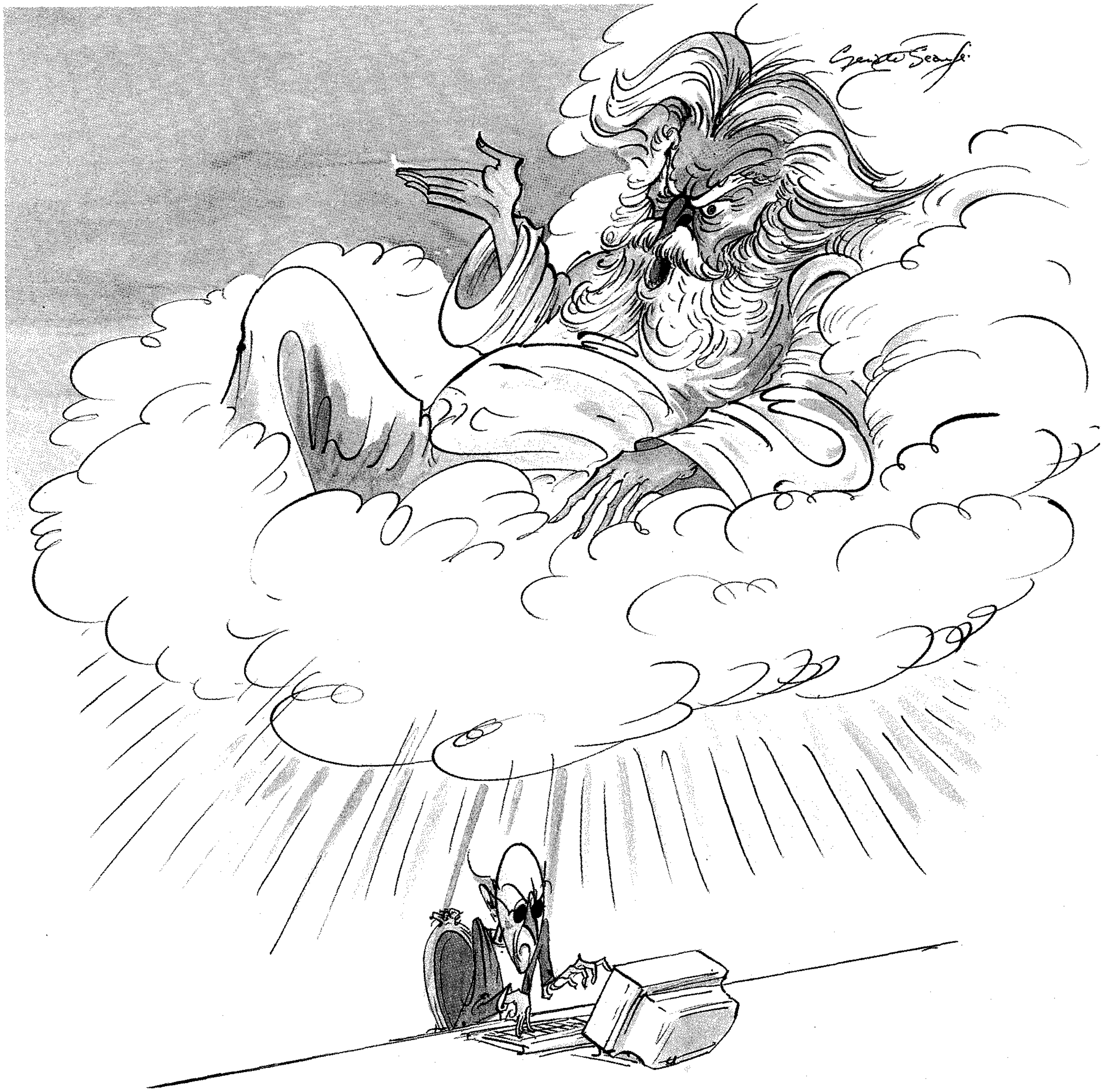
Professor Alter, whose earlier works include "Fielding and the Nature of the Novel" (1968) and "A Lion for Love: A Critical Biography of Stendhal" (1979), has been tilling the Biblical fields ever since "The Art of Biblical Narrative" (1981) and "The Art of Biblical Poetry" (1985). As his footnotes, which take up at least half of all but a few pages, make clear, Alter is profoundly steeped not just in the linguistic details of Hebrew but in the nigh-overwhelming amount of previous commentary, including the Midrash of rabbinical interpreters going back to the early centuries of the Christian era. At the same time, he has, as his œuvre shows, an appetite for literary theory—"Motives for Fiction" (1984), "Partial Magic: The Novel as Self-Conscious Genre" (1975)—and, as the passage quoted above indicates, a resolute sense of the Biblical style to be achieved.

He sees Biblical Hebrew as a "conventionally delimited language, roughly analogous in this respect to the French of the neoclassical theatre" and significantly though indeterminately distinct from the vanished vernacular of three thousand years ago. (The vernacular vocabulary, according to the Spanish Hebrew scholar Angel Sáenz-Badillos, must have exceeded the Bible's—a lexicon "so restricted that it is hard to believe it could have served all the purposes of quotidian existence in a highly developed society.") Alter has set himself to create a corresponding English—"stylized, decorous, dignified, and readily identified by its audiences as a language of literature," with a "slight strangeness," "beautiful rhythms," and other qualities (suppleness, precision, concreteness) that "by and large have been given short shrift by translators with their eyes on other goals." Why should not Alter's version, its program so richly contemplated and persuasively outlined, become the definitive one, replacing not only the King James but the plethora of its revised, uninspired, and "accessible" versions on the shelf?

Several reasons why not, in the course of my reading through this massive tome (sold sturdily boxed, as if to support its weight), emerged. The sheer amount of accompanying commentary and philological footnotes is one of them. The fifty-four churchmen and scholars empowered at a conference at Hampton Court in January of 1604 to provide an authoritative English Bible had a clear charge: to supply English readers with a self-explanatory text. When they encountered a crux, they took their best guess and worked on; many of the guesses can be improved upon now, but no suggestion of an unclear and imperfect original was allowed to trouble the Word of God. Alter's more academic and literary commission allows him to luxuriate in the forked possibilities of the Hebrew text, in its oldest forms written entirely in consonants, and without punctuation. Sample footnotes, taken at random from Deuteronomy:

> Some recent scholars have accepted Jacob Milgrom's proposal that here the verb *q-r-b* ("approach") is used in a political extension of its cultic meaning, "to encroach upon," though there is no compelling necessity to see that sense of the word in this verse.

> The second of the two Hebrew words here, *we'oyveinu pelilim*, is a notorious crux, evidently already a source of puzzlement to the ancient Greek translators. . . . If one notes that *pelilim* rhymes richly with *'elilim*, "idols," and if one recalls this poet's verbal in-



Alter luxuriates in the forked possibilities of the Hebrew text, written entirely in consonants and without punctuation.

GERALD SCARFE

> ventiveness in coining designations for the nonentity of the pagan gods, “would-be gods” is a distinct possibility.

It is difficult for the reader, given the overload of elucidation imposed upon the basic text, to maintain much momentum, and, indeed, one finds welcome refuge from the tedium and harshness of some Biblical passages in the companionable contemporary voice of the learned commentator. However, in his very zeal to communicate the nuances of the underlying Hebrew, Alter falls into the error of Vladimir Nabokov’s translation of “Eugene Onegin”: in the effort to achieve absolute fidelity, he settles on rather odd English.

Take Alter’s version, for starters, of the opening verses of Genesis:

> When God began to create heaven and earth, and the earth then was welter and waste and darkness over the deep and God’s breath hovering over the waters, God said, “Let there be light.” And there was light.

The King James has it thus:

> In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
>
> And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
>
> And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

Alter is the more concise, and is not above duplicating certain phrases of the King James, much as the royal committee drew upon the translation of Tyndale. But Alter’s syntax goes off the rails when “God’s breath hovering over the waters” is tacked onto a series of non-parallel nouns; by comparison, “And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” is clearer narrative and great poetry. It may stray minutely from the Hebrew but it is theologically intelligible.

Both translations can be usefully compared with that of Everett Fox, also titled “The Five Books of Moses” and published in 1995. Alter cites Fox as the out-standing exception to the general trend of a blandly readable English Bible—an extremist after Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, whose German Bible "flaunts Hebrew etymologies, preserves nearly all repetitions of Hebrew terms, and invents German words." Fox's version, set in lines like poetry, reads:

> At the beginning of God's creating of the heavens and the earth,
> when the earth was wild and waste,
> darkness over the face of Ocean,
> rushing-spirit of God hovering over the face of the waters—
> God said: Let there be light! And there was light.

This is a relatively tame specimen; elsewhere, Fox liberally coins compound adjectives like "heavy-with-stubbornness" and verbs like "adulter"—the seventh commandment becomes "You are not to adulter."

ALL HALLOWS' EVE

Be perfect, make it otherwise.
Yesterday is torn in shreds.
Lightning's thousand sulfur eyes
Rip apart the breathing beds.
Hear bones crack and pulverize.
Doom creeps in on rubber treads.
Countless overwrought housewives,
Minds unravelling like threads,
Try lipstick shades to tranquillize
Fears of age and general dreads.
Sit tight, be perfect, swat the spies,
Don't take faucets for fountainheads.
Drink tasty antidotes. Otherwise,
You and the werewolf: newlyweds.

—*Dorothea Tanning*

Alter is less extreme, but he does keep the ubiquitous sentence-beginning "and," derived from the Hebrew particle *waw;* he retains emphatic repetitions, as in "she, she, too" and "this red red stuff." He strives to preserve ambiguities and puns in the original. He conspicuously bends colloquial English in such renderings as: "Pharaoh will lift up your head from upon you"; "The land in the seven years of plenty made gatherings"; "A lion's whelp is Judah, / from the prey, O my son, you mount"; "Israel saw the great hand that the LORD had performed against Egypt"; "Moses would speak, and God would answer him with voice"; "Whether a son it gore or a daughter it gore, according to this practice it shall be done to him"; "and a man lie with her in seed-coupling"; "In the hand of the priest shall be the bitter besetting water"; "And it happened that there were men who were defiled by human corpse"; " 'Let us put up a head and return to Egypt' "; "And the LORD said to me, saying, 'Long enough you have swung round this high country.' " Alter has an annoying trick, no doubt in deference to the Hebrew, of putting a comma where we expect an article or preposition: "It was evening and it was morning, second day"; "the tree of knowledge, good and evil." Translating Exodus, he persists in using, in reference to Pharaoh's heart, the verb "toughened" where the usual translation uses "hardened" ("And Pharaoh's heart toughened"; "And the LORD toughened Pharaoh's heart"). He tests our knowledge of livestock terminology by employing "get" as a noun, as in Deuteronomy 28:4: "Blessed the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your soil and the fruit of your beasts, the get of your herds and the offspring of your flock."

A reader should, however, not shy from the rare but exact word, and none of Alter's eccentricities of diction substantially undermine his attempt to deliver a strongly rhythmic and ruggedly direct equivalent of the Hebrew. But who will read it? Fanciers of sheer literature will be put off by its bulk and its pedantic crossweave, and the millions of believers, Christian and Jewish, already have their versions, with cherished, trusted phrasings. The Bible in its centuries of recitation and memorization has generated a host of familiar images that turn out to be mistranslations. Jacob's ladder is really, it seems, Jacob's "ramp," the word in Hebrew occurring only in this instance and suggestive of a Mesopotamian ziggurat. Nor did Jacob, dreaming his dream of angels ascending and descending, have his head pillowed on a stone: "Rashi, followed by some modern scholars, proposes that the stone is not placed under Jacob's head but alongside it, as a kind of protective barrier." Joseph's coat of many colors has been altered to a mere "ornamented tunic." Onan, it turns out, was guilty not of onanism but, more likely, of prudent coitus interruptus with his brother's widow. Michelangelo was wrong: Moses did not come down from the mountain with the second edition of the Ten Commandments having sprouted horns, as recorded in the Vulgate and Aquila's translation into the Greek. His face merely glowed, from its recent exposure to the Divinity.

Reading through this book, or five books, is a wearying, disorienting, and at times revelatory experience. Our interest trends downhill. Of Genesis, Alter writes, "If this were the work of a single writer, one would say he begins at the top of his form." The Creation, the Garden, the Fall, the Flood, the Tower of Babel, and the patriarchal saga of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph make a more or less continuous story. Rereading it awakened certain sensations from my Sunday-school education, more than sixty years ago, when I seemed to stand on the edge of a brink gazing down at polychrome miniatures of abasement and terror, betrayal and reconciliation. Jacob deceiving blind Isaac with patches of animal hair on the backs of his hands, Joseph being stripped of his gaudy coat and left in a pit by his brothers, little Benjamin being fetched years later by these same treacherous brothers into the imperious presence of a mysterious stranger invested with all Pharaoh's authority—these glimpses into a world paternal to our own, a robed and sandalled world of origins and crude conflict and direct discourse with God, came to me via flimsy leaflets illustrating that week's lesson, and were mediated by the mild-mannered commentary of the Sunday-school teacher, a humorless embodiment of small-town respectability, passing on conventional Christianity by rote. Nevertheless, I was stirred and disturbed, feeling exposed to the perilous basis beneath the surface of daily routine, of practical schooling and family interchange and popular culture.

The curious, heated familial closeness of the Biblical narrative distinguishes it from other compilations of legend. Erich Auerbach, in the first chapter of his masterly "Mimesis" (1946), compares Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac with an incident in the Odyssey, and exclaims of the Biblical characters, "How much wider is the pendulum swing of their lives than that of the Homeric heroes!" He explains:

> For they are bearers of the divine will, and yet they are fallible, subject to misfortune and humiliation. . . . There is hardly one of them who does not, like Adam, undergo the deepest humiliation—and hardly one who is not deemed worthy of God's personal intervention and personal inspiration.

Leaving God out of it, Auerbach claims that the Biblical protagonists give

> a more concrete, direct, and historical impression than the figures of the Homeric world—not because they are better described in terms of sense (the contrary is the case) but because the confused, contradictory multiplicity of events, the psychological and factual cross-purposes, which true history reveals, have not disappeared in the representation but still remain clearly perceptible.

In Exodus, dominated by Moses, the narrative begins to sour; the warmth and humanity of Genesis drain away. Moses is Israel's foremost prophet, but he is not a patriarch, and lacks the charm that ancestors possess. The intimate family scale of Genesis yields to something cooler and more mechanical; Alter in his introduction speaks of a "new wide-angle lens" and "the distancing of the central character and the distancing of the figure of God." Not that God is silent; He has more to say than before or since. Moses is His mouthpiece and, like any lawyer with a demanding client, sometimes loses his temper. The long negotiation with Pharaoh over the release of the Jews from captivity (chapters 7 to 14) is especially aggravating, as God sends plague after plague upon Egypt, only to "toughen" Pharaoh's heart, each time, just as a deal seems cinched. The plea, in the King James version, "Let my people go," has become in Alter the more businesslike "Send off My people." God directs Moses to "tell in the hearing of your son and your son's son how I toyed with Egypt"; the King James has "what things I have wrought in Egypt," but Alter's "toyed" better catches the mood of mounting sadism and vengefulness, up to God's killing "every firstborn in the land of Egypt from the firstborn of man to the firstborn of beast." He vows, "From all the gods of Egypt I will exact retribution."

In the vaulted, newly fashioned skies over Genesis, God, as Auerbach notes, "was not fixed in form and content, and was alone." In the more crowded and pluralistic world of Exodus, God appears to forget that He is the object of a monotheistic cult. He competes with Pharaoh as an equal. His first commandment declares Him to be a jealous god. A footnote to "Who is like You among the gods, O LORD," admits, "Hebrew writers had no difficulty in conceding the existence of other deities, though always stipulating, as here, their absolute inferiority to the God of Israel." Not only does primitive polytheism haunt Exodus's long sojourn in the wilderness but there is a flavor of stage magic: pillars of smoke and flame, rocks that gush water, manna from Heaven, finger-writing in stone, and elaborate specifications for the Ark containing the tablets of the Covenant and the tent enclosing the Ark. The magic of equivalence roughly shapes justice: "You shall pay a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, a bruise for a bruise."

Strictures and specifications continue in Leviticus; indeed, Leviticus contains little else, and reads like an instruction manual for the emergent priestly class and its Levite assistants. Multitudinous avoidances of impurity define the solidifying Israelite identity. Unclean are: carcasses; menstruating women; men who have just had a seminal emission; the meat of reptiles, amphibians, birds of prey, pigs, bats, rats, animals that bring up the cud but lack hooves, and animals that go on four paws. (From the injunction "You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk," presumably a pagan delicacy, was derived the Jewish prohibition of any combination of meat and dairy prod-

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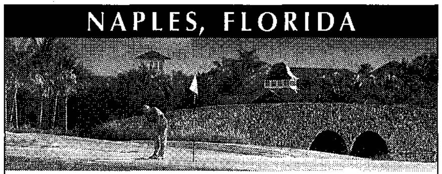

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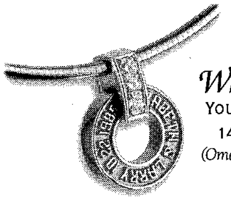

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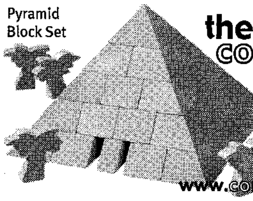

ucts.) A vast prophylaxis regulates every bodily activity and constantly reminds the Israelites of their responsibility: they must be kept pure, unique, chosen. An offender shall be "cut off from his kin." Amid these relentless pages of exclusionary litany, it is a salutary shock to find the inclusive injunction "And you shall love your fellow man as yourself."

The Book of Numbers extends the enumerative trend with a proud toting up of the Israelite tribes, reckoned to include more than six hundred thousand adult males, and an account of conquests that prepares us, Alter states, "for the defining moment of the crossing of the Jordan, with Joshua in command." In Deuteronomy, Moses delivers a lengthy, highly rhetorical valedictory to the Israelites as they prepare to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land. He rehearses their forty years of wandering; he repeats laws enunciated in Exodus and Leviticus; he threatens his audience with an outpouring of curses. Consumption and jaundice, madness and blindness, hemorrhoids and drought: "All these curses will come upon you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed." Moses recites two long and obscure poems that, dating back perhaps to the eleventh century B.C., the time of the Judges, are among the oldest texts in the Bible. The historical events, if any, behind the Biblical descriptions of Exodus are dated to the thirteenth century B.C., and the passionate rhetoric of Deuteronomy was meant, according to Alter, "to persuade audiences in the late First Commonwealth and exilic period of the palpable and authoritative reality of an event that never occurred, or at any rate surely did not occur as it is represented in this text." The definitive collection and composition, by priestly writers, of much of the Old Testament belongs to the sixth and fifth centuries, in the Babylonian exile, after the descendants of Abraham had seen, God's promises to the contrary, Jerusalem conquered and the Temple destroyed. The gathering fierceness and strictness of the Torah are those of an embattled people and an embattled priesthood.

In the course of the Pentateuch, God's personality deteriorates. The deity of Genesis—Who with His own hands fashions Adam from dust ("humus" in one of Alter's less happy improvements upon the King James text) and Who strolls in the evening cool of Eden, teases Sarah into geriatric childbearing, and wrestles the night away with her grandson Jacob—becomes, after His implacable hail of plagues upon Pharaoh's land in Exodus, dismayingly cruel. More than once, He urges Moses' followers to put opposing nations "under the ban"—that is, to massacre them, to commit genocide. "He will cast off many nations from before you," Moses promises in Deuteronomy:

> And the LORD your God will give them before you and you shall strike them down. You shall surely put them under the ban. You shall not seal a covenant with them and shall show them no mercy.

In a footnote, Alter uneasily explains that one commentator calls the emphasis on *herem* ("the ban") "utopian" and "wishful thinking." He adds, "There is, thankfully, no archeological evidence that this program of annihilation was ever implemented." God advocates *herem* not just for Canaanite foes but for Israelite cities that have backslid into pagan practices: "You shall surely strike down the inhabitants of that town by the edge of the sword, putting it under the ban, it and everything in it, and its beasts, by the edge of the sword." Again, Alter pleads utopian thinking. Utopian also must be stoning to death "a man or a woman who does evil in the eyes of the LORD," or cutting off the offending hand of a woman who, in trying "to rescue her man from the hand of the one striking him," inadvertently seizes his genitals. Such punishments persist in parts of the Middle East, though the Koran, a thousand years younger than the Pentateuch, is relatively lenient.

The Lord's striking dead a number of hungry Israelites who have begun to eat some sun-dried quail—"The meat was still between their teeth, it had not yet been chewed, when the LORD's wrath flared against the people"—seems savage, as does the slaying of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, the leaders of some grumblers. In embarrassment, before their consumption in God's wrathful fire, Moses tells them, "The LORD has sent me to do all these deeds. . . . It was not from my own heart." And God's treatment of Moses, his servant and spokesman through forty years of trial, puzzles the modern reader: Moses is sentenced to die on Mt. Abarim, in sight of the Promised Land, because he and his brother Aaron, in God's words, "betrayed Me in the midst of the Israelites through the waters of Meribath-Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin." Beg Your pardon? Zin and Kadesh are mentioned in Numbers in connection with a scouting party that came back and said the Canaanites were too big to attack; the alarmed Israelites expressed the view that it might be better to go back to Egypt. For these qualms all the scouts but two, Caleb and Joshua, are slain by God, and the wandering multitude is condemned to forty years of the wilderness. Moses, though he does his best to soothe the indignant deity, is contaminated by this collective faltering of faith, and is left behind on the mountain.

The ferocity of this tribal God measures the ferocity of tribal existence. In Exodus 3:14, when Moses asks God his name, the answer in Hebrew, *'Ehyeh-'Asher-'Ehyeh*, has been commonly rendered I AM THAT I AM but could be, Alter reports, simply I AM, I AM. An impression grew upon me, as I made my way through these obdurate old texts, that to the ancient Hebrews God was simply a word for what was: a universe often beautiful and gracious but also implacable and unfathomable. In this encompassing semi-darkness, the figures in the Bible pursue difficulties oddly similar (compared with those of Greek gods and aristocrats) to those in our own problematical, mostly domestic lives, and in this they are the patriarchs and matriarchs of modern fiction, which also offers to illuminate the human predicament. The miracle of the Pentateuch is that, unlike the numerous other tribes and gods that vitally figure in it, the Jews and their God have survived three millennia. The Israelites' effort to claim and maintain their Promised Land fuels a contemporary crisis and occupies today's painful headlines. It is still cruelly true that, as we read in the Alter version of Numbers:

> If you do not dispossess the inhabitants of the land from before you, it will come about that those of them you leave will become stings in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they will be foes to you on the land in which you dwell. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

The Line of Beauty, *by Alan Hollinghurst (Bloomsbury; $24.95).* Hollinghurst's Booker-winning novel about nineteen-eighties London takes its title from the undulating line that Hogarth identified as the source of pleasure in art; from the cocaine that the protagonist, Nick Guest, and his rich boyfriend continually snort; and even from the narrative of Nick's life, as he sees it. Nick's lust for an unattainable straight friend, Toby Fedden, leads him to become a permanent guest in the Fedden household, where he mingles with the politicians and businessmen clustered around Toby's father, an ambitious Tory M.P. Nick is doing graduate work on Henry James, and, like a Jamesian hero, he subsumes deeper longings into an aestheticized fixation with handsome lovers and with the Feddens' elegant world—a reverie that is shattered by public scandal and by AIDS. If Nick's aesthetic detachment occasionally seems to reduce the novel's emotional stakes, it nonetheless fuels Hollinghurst's sumptuous writing and his bravura evocation of an entire era.

The Normals, *by David Gilbert (Bloomsbury; $24.95).* Two weeks as a human guinea pig in a pharmaceutical company's drug-testing facility seems like a good idea to twenty-eight-year-old Billy Schine, pursued by debt collectors and desperate for money. But he hasn't counted on the other "normals" with whom he is confined, as they await the possible side effects of an antipsychotic drug. These include a budding nymphomaniac, an alcoholic repeat tester, a bombastic aspiring actor waiting for his big break as a courtier in "Hamlet," and a withdrawn, Bible-quoting country boy who veers dangerously close to true psychosis. Everyone here is trying to avoid the realities of life beyond the ward, and much of the novel's antic humor derives from Gilbert's unerring grasp of America's varied forms of self-medication. But what makes this first novel memorable is its exploration of the contradictory desire both to escape the world and to be plunged back into it.

Brodsky: A Personal Memoir, *by Ludmila Shtern (Baskerville; $25.95).* Joseph Brodsky's reputation as a poet is singular in Russia, and yet he emerged from a group of mentors, friends, and colleagues in postwar Leningrad that was as tight and as nourishing as any literary circle in modern history. Ludmila Shtern, like Brodsky, emigrated to the United States; their friendship was intimate and lifelong. Her memoir is an emotionally rich anecdotal account of Brodsky, along with his teacher, Anna Akhmatova, and his poet friends Evgeny Rein, Anatoly Naiman, and Dmitri Bobyshev. The memoir is especially keen when it is describing Brodsky's radical individuality in a collectivist nightmare, his absolute insistence on poetical rigor, and his personal independence. Shtern adores Brodsky—his courage when he was put on trial, his refusal to become a political icon or anything other than a poet—though she does not hesitate to show his moments of harshness, even cruelty. Brodsky does not always translate well into English; here, as in his essays, he takes on the fullness of the real thing.

The Man Who Outgrew His Prison Cell, *by Joe Loya (Rayo; $24.95).* In his twenties, Loya achieved notoriety as the smooth-talking "Beirut Bandit," who robbed dozens of Southern California banks. When the police caught up with him, in 1989, they discovered a Mexican-American from East L.A. who had once been a promising student. Imprisoned for seven years, he grew more violent until two years of solitary confinement prompted a remarkable self-transformation. Loya's memoir, begun in prison, is less concerned with his crimes than with their background—his family history, the details of barrio life, and the peculiar cultural currents that led him to identify with Reagan Republicanism and then to seek its perceived entitlements by any means. In the end, Loya's account of his struggle to redeem himself seems more genuinely thrilling than his crime spree.

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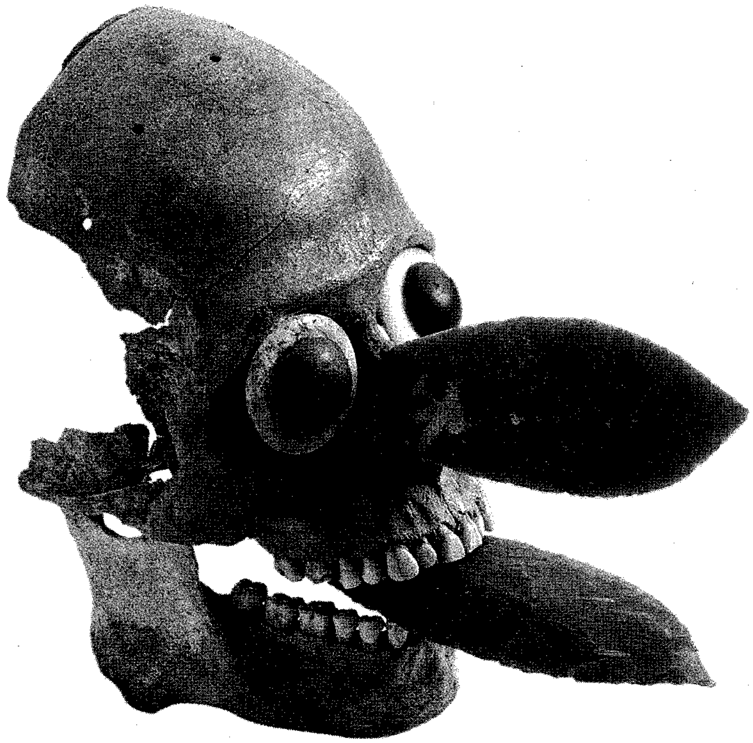
THE ART WORLD

MEMENTO MORI

The Aztecs at the Guggenheim.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

The hypercivilized, unimaginably savage Aztecs made war almost tenderly, wielding wooden swords that were edged with bits of obsidian or flint and, in face-to-face combat, endeavoring not to kill their enemies but, commonly by striking at their legs, to disable and capture them. Later, the captives—thousands of them for a rededication of the Great Temple at Tenochtitlán (now Mexico City) in 1478—were led to high platforms, where priests tore out and displayed their still-beating hearts. An especially respected prisoner might be allowed to fight for his life against Aztec warriors, at the last, with clubs and a sword, but his sword was edged with feathers. If he behaved well, his soul would ascend to a "flower paradise," one of the Aztecs' thirteen heavens. (People who died of ordinary disease or old age incurred ignominy in the afterlife.) His body was given to his original captor, who drank the blood and wore the flayed skin until, in the words of the military historian John Keegan, "it and its scraps of attached flesh rotted into deliquescence." The Aztecs, while consolidating their imperial sway over central Mexico, were probably as lethal on the battlefield as conquerors usually are; but, from the middle of the fifteenth century until 1519, when they met an enemy of a bewildering new sort, their main casus belli was a standing order for sacrificial victims. The stability and very survival of the world enjoined it, in the view of their religion. (The key belief was that certain gods, having sacrificed themselves to make human existence possible, demanded incessant repayment in kind.) No other people known to history practiced ritual murder so relentlessly, on so grand a scale.



A skull mask, with flint knives for the nose and the tongue.

COURTESY MUSEO DEL TEMPLO MAYOR, INAH, MEXICO CITY

"The Aztec Empire," at the Guggenheim, is advertised as the most comprehensive exhibition of Aztec art ever mounted outside Mexico. Backed by Mexican governmental agencies and corporations, it amounts to a diplomatic potlatch, sparing no effort or expense. Its four hundred and thirty-five exhibits, some of them multi-part, of stone and fired-clay sculpture, ritual and domestic objects, jewelry, and early colonial artifacts, place the Aztecs—or Mexicas, as the core group of the empire is properly named—in context with cultures that preceded or opposed them. The works are presented, one by one or in small groups, along serpentine walls covered with dark-gray wool felt, effecting point-blank encounters with their often terrific force. The show centers on objects from the Great Temple, whose treasure-laden ruins were discovered, by accident, only in 1978. Statues of gods and warriors are preponderant—as are animals, which compose a marvellous bestiary that ranges from hieratic snakes and jaguars to an enormous stone flea. (Vegetables were venerated, too; the sleek beauty of a green stone pumpkin, more than a foot long, evokes Brancusi.) Like ancient Greek sculpture, Aztec statuary has lost all but traces of its original polychrome surface. Mostly gone, too, are teeth and eyes of obsidian and shell, which, in surviving examples, bring figures to burning life. But scarcely anything in the show feels like filler or fails to enthrall. You will want to visit "The Aztec Empire" more than once.

I couldn't shake the thought that most of the show's contents were made with and for eyes that routinely beheld terrible acts, including rites of "autosacrifice," which the Aztecs performed at all their religious ceremonies. (The higher a man's status in the theocratic and military state, the more self-wounding was expected of him.) Handsome basins for blood and body parts abound. Sights and smells of gore attended normal life in Tenochtitlán—children must have grown up liking them. Oddly, the alien and alienating viciousness of Aztec culture makes it more accessible than that of other bygone and tribal nations. It provides dramatic focus. Confronting such things as a blackly humorous skull mask, made from a real skull, we know exactly where we stand with the Aztecs: aghast. The supreme quality of their supple, sensitive, elegant arts may be the scariest thing about them, because it testifies that a civilization based on slaughter steadied and inspired human genius.

"Powerful" is the mot juste for the creativity of the Aztecs, whose familiarity with death-dealing seems to have imparted a rangy, even insouciant fearlessness. A viewer soon recognizes differences between Aztec art and the relics, often similar in motif and form, of the ancient Olmec (1300-400 B.C.), the Teotihuacán (first six centuries A.D.), and the Toltec (900-1150), and of contemporaneous groups, including the Mixtec and the Tarascan (whose blocky, peppily cartoonish figures were imitated by Keith Haring). Something a little loose and relatively vulnerable—perhaps playful, perhaps stoical or beseeching—betrays a non-Aztec provenance. You feel that you could come to an understanding with such folk. Distinctively leaner and meaner, Aztec art projects an absolute, crushing confidence. Seen from the front, one large, astonishing gray stone carving, incorporating a basin for hearts and blood, resembles nothing so much as a modified tank. It represents an eagle whose folded wings are like wraparound tracks, and whose ground-hugging, thrusting shape conjures the growl and shriek of a mighty engine. And a fired-clay "eagle warrior"—stern face set in the gaping beak of a helmet-like eagle's head, arms winged, knees taloned—suggests a prototypical attack aircraft. There were more than a hundred Aztec divinities, but the only visibly happy one in this show appears to be Xipe Totec, a god honored in a rite of flaying. In three clay sculptures, he gaily models lumpy but neatly tailored suits of human skin.

The Aztecs believed that they lived in the epoch of the Fifth Sun. The first four had perished in disasters of devouring jaguars, hurricane winds, a rain of fire, and a great flood, and they thought that their own sun would be destroyed by earthquakes, after one of the fifty-two-year periods between the alignment of their three-hundred-and-sixty-five-day solar calendar and their two-hundred-and-sixty-day ceremonial calendar. (Calendar stones, codices, and other records of Aztec thought are largely absent from the show, whose curator, Felipe Solís, chose to emphasize figurative art.) The people passed the eve of the appointed day in dread. All fires in the empire were put out, and, when the rise of the Pleiades constellation heralded a new cycle, relighted from a single sacrificial blaze. The visual expression of the Aztec cosmology and theology rivals, in its sheer complexity, that of Hinduism, absent the sensuality. Fertility is represented by several deities, but with explicit reference more often to agriculture—there are lots of corncobs—than to procreation. Aztec figures almost never displayed genitals, in sharp contrast to works by the Tarascan. The Aztecs were not fun-lovers. Misplays in their famous ballgame—a gruelling cross between basketball and soccer, memorialized in the show by a model playing court and balls of greenstone and alabaster—entailed sobering penalties, such as decapitation. A sense that any lapse in duty risked cosmic consequences haunted the highly bureaucratic government and the hierarchical society of nobles (the semi-divine emperor, priests, lords, generals) and commoners (merchants, artisans, peasants, laborers). War offered opportunities for upward mobility. Education, segregated by rank, was universal. An evenhanded judicial system prescribed death for most crimes, including the wearing, by a commoner, of cotton clothes, which were reserved for the élite.

The empire proved a pushover for Cortés, for several reasons. One is that the Aztecs had violated the show-business adage about being careful how you treat people on your way up. Embittered neighbors enthusiastically joined the Spaniards—at whose hands they would suffer, in their turn—to demolish Tenochtitlán, in 1521. The Aztecs, with their ceremonial and sporting approach to warfare, were unequal not just to steel and gunpowder but to soldiers (rather than warriors), who killed pragmatically and rarely bothered to take prisoners. Smallpox completed the devastation. The story that Montezuma II was unnerved by a suspicion that Cortés, in his armor, was the plumed serpent-god Quetzalcoatl—he tried to buy off the conqueror, as one would the gods, with lavish offerings—is disputed by scholars. But it seems clear that the emperor could not think outside the terms of a faith that had appeared to account for all eventualities. To enter the force field of the Aztecs' collective dream, at the Guggenheim, is to reset the defaults of your imagination. We may wish that religiously motivated death cults were beyond the pale of human nature, but they weren't then and they aren't now. ♦

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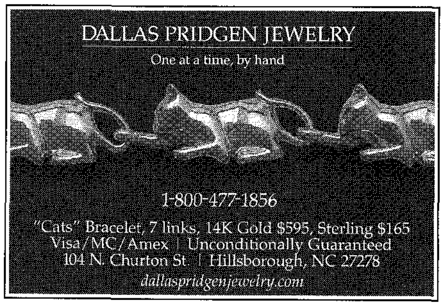
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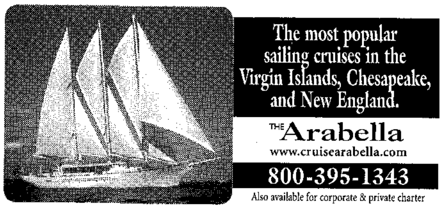
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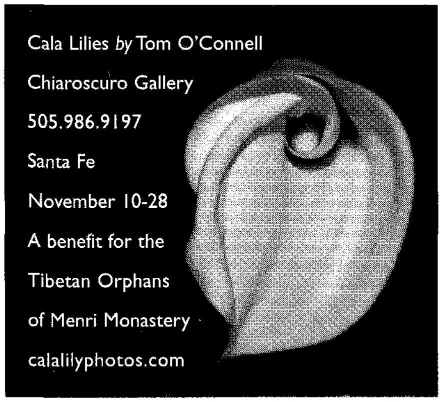
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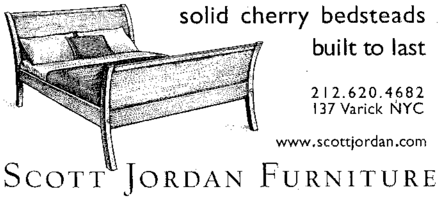
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POP MUSIC

1979

The year punk died, and was reborn.

BY SASHA FRERE-JONES

In 1979, The Clash were experiencing some pressure. Whether they wanted it or not, punk rock had become their responsibility. In New York, the Ramones had come up with the musical idea of reducing rock to three chords, doubling the volume, and accelerating songs until they sounded like Morse code. In London, the Sex Pistols had turned disgust into an ideology and made punk a historical moment, inspiring teen-agers across England to start bands. But by March of 1979 the Ramones had become more interested in being themselves than in changing the world, the Sex Pistols had disbanded, and The Clash, feeling burned out, had fired the manager who helped put the band together, in 1976. Yet they still owed CBS a record.

The Clash were able to fit more music and faith through the keyhole of punk than anyone else. Their début album, "The Clash," was a brick in flight, fourteen songs, half of them under two minutes long. The lyrics talk about the riots the band members want to start, the American imperialism they want to stop, and England's general lack of "career opportunities." It is an act of political resistance and pure pleasure. Their second album, "Give 'Em Enough Rope," was criticized for having an allegedly American sheen, but you'd have trouble hearing that now. The music is hard and echoey, barking but sweetly melodic. Actually, no—the hierarchy is more specific than that. Someone is singing sweetly way in the back, behind the loud guitars, and there's a very loud singer in the front who sounds like he's going to die if he doesn't get to sing *right now*. The one in the back is Mick Jones, the guitarist, who wrote most of The Clash's music, and the one in the front is Joe Strummer, who wrote and sang most of the lyrics, if singing is the right word. Strummer delivered words as if there were no such things as amplification and he would have been willing to run around town singing through a tube if he had to.

Strummer's moral authority, coupled with Jones's ability to synthesize decades of rock music without seeming too clever, made people care about The Clash, personally, intensely, and totally. When the band, not yet a year old, signed with CBS in 1977, the London fanzine writer Mark Perry said, "Punk died the day The Clash signed to CBS." Perry was only taking the band as seriously as they took themselves. Strummer, especially, believed that punk should be available to all, and felt inherently hostile to authority. Paradoxically, it was the corporate paymaster CBS that eventually ran ads for The Clash with the tagline "The only band that matters." In March of 1979, everyone, including The Clash, knew that the hype might be more than hype. But how could a rock band possibly live up to those expectations?

By releasing "London Calling," sixty-five minutes of rock music that never goes wrong. Without self-importance, the music covers huge amounts of ground. The stories hang together with the weight of commandments and the serendipitous grace of a pile of empty bottles. Montgomery Clift becomes a folk hero ("The Right Profile"), the myth of Stagger Lee is resurrected for a new audience ("Wrong 'Em, Boyo"), and London burns. Nothing sounds forced or insincere, not the breezy cover of an obscure English rockabilly song ("Brand New Cadillac") or fantasies of being a Jamaican bad boy ("Revolution Rock"). Hyperbole itself cannot diminish this record. Each of us is invincible when it's playing.

Now reissued in a new boxed set, "London Calling" comes with a bonus CD of rehearsals and a DVD documentary about the making of the album and original promo clips. This generosity would have pleased Strummer, who died in 2002, but he likely would have been less thrilled that the set lists for $29.98. When the album was originally released, as a two-LP set, the band felt that their records had to be priced for punks and insisted that CBS sell it for $9.98.

The documentary and the rough rehearsal demos make the same point: The Clash worked fiendishly hard to be magical. In an on-camera interview, Strummer says, "For some reason, we weren't night-clubbing people. All I can remember is writing and rehearsing and recording. A real intensity of effort." The rehearsals are evidence that the songs on "London Calling" were almost entirely worked out before the record's producer, Guy Stevens, was even hired. The only remaining task was to record the music. How Stevens, who died of an overdose of an anti-alcohol medication two years later, helped do this is unclear; thanks to this DVD, history will remember him as the guy who threw chairs and swung ladders about while The Clash recorded.

The Ramones had the idea, the Sex Pistols made history, The Clash made the records.

JEROEN KOOLHAAS

On "London Calling," Strummer remakes his major points: the police are on the wrong side, wage labor will crush your soul, and sometimes people need to destroy property to be heard. His sense of righteousness is enhanced by the album's sequencing, which feels Biblically logical and begins with one of the best opening songs of any record ever, the title track. The song starts cold. Two guitar chords ring on the downbeats, locked in step with the drums, marching forward with no dynamic variation. A second guitar introduces difference, coming toward us like an ambulance Dopplering into range. The bass guitar, sounding like someone's voice, heralds everybody over the hill and into the song. If you can listen to it without getting a chilly burst of immortality, there is a layer between you and the world. Joe Strummer simultaneously watches the riots and sloughs off his role as de-facto punk president: "London calling, now don't look to us / All that phony Beatlemania has bitten the dust / London calling, see we ain't got no swing / 'Cept for the ring of that truncheon thing." The chorus forms a keystone for the whole album: "A nuclear error, but I have no fear / London is drowning and I, I live by the river." The Clash are laughing at Margaret Thatcher and will be dancing long after the police have come and gone.

And what can you call this generous mountain of music, this sound that levitates around its own grievances like a plane on fire? Is it chopped-up rock? Very loud reggae? Some kind of devotional punk? The sensation of hearing several kinds of music at once runs through the album. Reggae is a force that permeates much of it, both as a source of topical songwriting and as a sound, but nothing on the album is strictly reggae. A song like the massive "Clampdown" shifts naturally through three sections: the four huge, descending chords big enough to open a season at Bayreuth; the dancing, pendulous rock of the verses; and the taunting funk of the bridge. The song fades away in a vamp that sounds like disco, so light you might get the impression the band had forgotten everything they'd just sung about: institutional racism, political brainwashing, and the creeping compromise of working life. "You start wearing the blue and brown / You're working for the clampdown / So you got someone to boss around / It makes you feel big now." The hectoring is never so simple that you don't wonder if they're directing it partly at themselves.

The album's soul might be found in "The Guns of Brixton," by the group's bassist, Paul Simonon. It's reggae thickened up and filtered by musicians who don't exactly know how to play reggae but love it completely. Their heavy hands make it something new. Simonon is a croaky and untrained singer, and this only enhances his convictions: "When they kick at your front door / How you gonna come? / With your hands on your head / Or on the trigger of your gun?" Threatening your rivals and writing scatological lyrics is one way to be "controversial." Staring down the riot police is another.

If Strummer's instincts were not his alone, then somewhere right now a kid is throwing a fancy, overpriced package of twenty-five-year-old material across the room and pledging to reinvent punk rock once and for all, doubting her heroes while carrying their astonishing music in her whole body. ♦

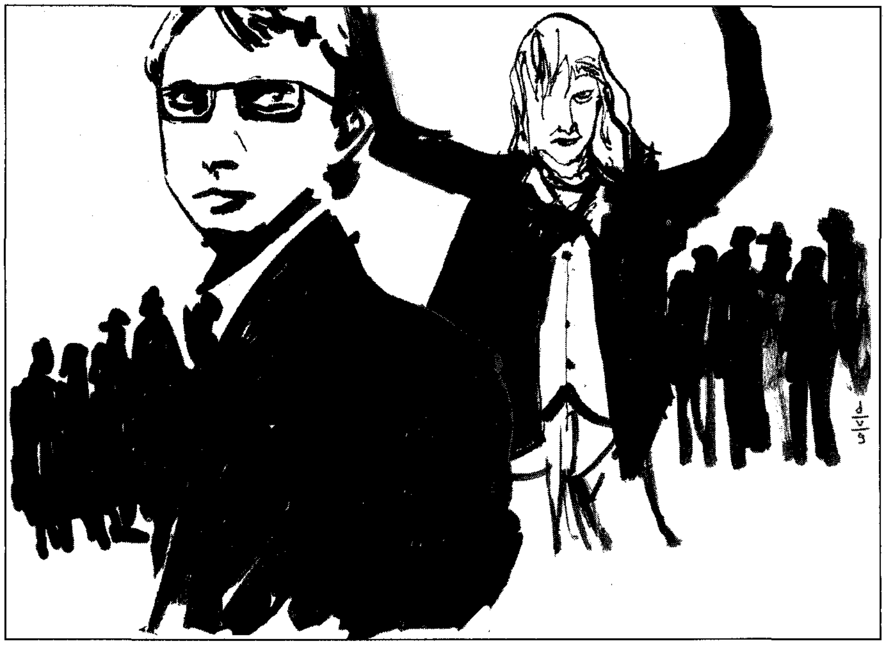
THE CURRENT CINEMA

AFTERMATHS

"Enduring Love," "Hearts and Minds."

BY ANTHONY LANE

The opening scene of Ian McEwan's "Enduring Love" has, since the novel was published, in 1998, achieved an enduring fame of its own. This may be the case, too, with the film of the book, which was adapted by Joe Penhall and directed by Roger Michell. We start with a heat-heavy English summer, and with Joe (Daniel Craig) and his girlfriend, Claire (Samantha Morton), sitting in a field; he starts to open a bottle of champagne, and only a viewer of nervous disposition would point out the slight but sickening tilt at which the meadow's greenness is filmed, as if to hint that this idyll is about to go downhill. Behind the lovers drifts a sudden, enormous sun. In fact, it is a hot-air balloon, a larger and more lethal version of the child's plaything that sailed over Paris rooftops in "The Red Balloon." This one is out of control, scuffing along the ground, and a boy is left in the basket as the giant globe catches the wind and ascends. Hanging on, by a rope, is somebody we haven't seen before—a passerby who must have run to offer help. In a terrible silence, he clings and then, almost peacefully, lets go.



Daniel Craig and Rhys Ifans in the adaptation of Ian McEwan's novel.

So much is at work here that it all but blots out the rest of the film. There is the intrusion, into happiness, of rude catastrophe; there is the heartening thought that human beings will still drop everything, including themselves, to save another person; and, lastly, there is the premonition of an aftermath. "Enduring Love" is the first picture since Peter Weir's remarkable "Fearless" to rebuke the genre of disaster movies by addressing, instead, the scorched spirits of those who traverse disaster, like firewalkers, and emerge on the other side. Not long after the accident, Joe and Claire start to bicker and peel apart, a division made worse by the reappearance of Jed (Rhys Ifans). On the day of the accident, Jed manifested himself, at Joe's side, like a dishevelled angel, and he does something similar again, standing in the park opposite Joe's apartment or collaring him in a bookstore. At first, you suspect a therapeutic craving—both men saw the body of the fallen man, which was meat and bone from the waist down, and they might profit from discussing what they felt. We swiftly realize, however, that Jed is not a heavenly messenger. He is the stalker from hell.

One problem with stalkers—as Michell's film makes abundantly clear—is that, whether or not they physically threaten you, they can sure bore you to death. All too soon, Joe finds Jed to be a pain, and we share his irritation. Daniel Craig—who starred as Ted Hughes, complete with bardic forelock, in the recent bio-pic of Sylvia Plath—wears the stunned and dented look of an ex-boxer, and it's hard for him to find much appeal, or even sanity, in this harassed hero. You keep wanting to slap Joe awake and shout, "Get a life," "Get a court order," "Get a shrink." He plainly suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, but the movie, with a slightly nasty hauteur, handles it less as a treatable condition than as a form of lyrical agony. His obsession with a single incident leads him to refashion it in his own living room, as Richard Dreyfuss did in "Close Encounters of the Third Kind." Joe solemnly blows up balloons in the same way that Dreyfuss sweated over his mountains of mashed potato. The difference lies in that solemnity. Spielberg was relaxed enough to identify a comic thrust in such mania, whereas Roger Michell seems wary of loosening, or roughing up, the tenseness of his material.

This is a shame, because it was Michell who was sufficiently unawed, back in 1995, to unbuckle the bonds of "Persuasion" and unveil the best Jane Austen movie—a whisker ahead of "Clueless"—that most of us have seen. He also made "Notting Hill," which, however you rate its premise, was firm in its comic footwork. So what led him to the jokeless gloomarama that is "Enduring Love"? Maybe he foresaw a play of ideas, and there are certainly plenty on show: Jed professes a God-given, semi-sexual devotion to Joe, who is a college professor, and who just happens, throughout the movie, to be delivering garbled lectures to his students on the subject of romantic desire. Plus, for good measure, Claire has a brother who pronounces that he is infatuated with his children's Polish au pair, for whom he is

DEREK VAN GIESON

leaving his wife. In short, everything connects. We are guided through a set of variations on the theme of love, and offered no respite—there is almost nothing in the movie that is *not* about love, right down to a mystery couple, further witnesses to the accident, who appear toward the end and declare their eternal bond. In a novel, or a poem, such concentrated attention would be hard to fault. On film, sadly, it feels as if somebody were sitting on your head. The ideas behind "Enduring Love" may be fascinating, but they don't play; they sulk, and so it was, during yet another adoring rant from Jed the pest, that I leaned over to the friend beside me and whispered, "All I really, really want at this moment, in the whole world, is to be watching 'Dodgeball.' "

This is not to claim that a better film could be made of McEwan's book. I'm not convinced that, aside from the fable-like terror of its opening, there is much in the novel, with its hypercontrolled intelligence, that sits happily onscreen. When a director is forced to enliven a quiet dinner sequence by cranking up the sound so that the consumption of shrimp tempura sounds like a gnashing outtake from "Godzilla," it suggests that he hasn't got enough proper drama to get his teeth into. Meanwhile, some of the characters simply fall off the edge of the story; Bill Nighy, an actor who can usually lift any mood, wanders in holding a baby, though whether he is meant to be someone's lover, father, or grandfather I genuinely can't tell you, even now. This lack of grip persists to the finale, in which Joe and Jed, with Claire playing piggy-in-the-middle, square up to their demons. As a literary construction, the scene makes absolute sense; as the climax to a psychological thriller, it feels clenched and ridiculous. "Enduring Love" tells us that the balloons to avoid are the ones that don't know whether to float or stick to the ground. The same goes for movies.

It is thirty years since "Hearts and Minds," Peter Davis's inflamed documentary on the Vietnam War, caused a stir, and the hope is, presumably, that to release the movie again will set off a restir. In no way has its reek of indignation dwindled over the years, and it continues to spit and seethe in its eagerness to provoke. In form, it feels loose and free, with the kind of caffeinated freedom that all decent directors of the mid-seventies seemed to consider their due. We get a roster of talking heads, ranging from General William Westmoreland to embittered vets to Vietnamese women in mourning, all of it interspersed with shots of beatings and bombings. If anything, I could have used a touch more rigidity; minimal effort is made to provide a chronology of the conflict, and younger viewers may be left both repelled and underinformed—always a dangerous blend.

But then information, I guess, is not on the agenda of those re-releasing the film. They don't just want us to look and learn; they want us to compare and contrast, with particular reference to a more recent venture. "What does Vietnam look like?" a schoolgirl asks Lieutenant George Coker, a former prisoner of war and returning hero, in 1973. "If it wasn't for the people, it was very pretty," he replies, adding, "They just make a mess out of everything." Nguyen Ngoc Linh, the genial chairman of the Mekong Conglomerate, which imported Ford cars and other necessities, describes himself as "a Johnny-come-lately as far as war profiteering is concerned," which is nothing if not honest, and claims that he is preparing for "the economic take-off that will come with peace." But the strategic parallels with Iraq are too creaky to be of much use, and moviegoers may prefer to ponder discrepancies in tone. On the one hand, the proud imbalance of "Hearts and Minds," which gives no clue that atrocities were committed by the other side, and which allows Davis to cut from a rampaging football game, back home, to the Tet offensive, will be a lesson to anybody who thinks that Michael Moore invented the notion of documentary as blunderbuss. On the other hand, Clark Clifford's admission that his opinion of the war was changed, for the worse, by a long and dispiriting session with the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1968—this while he was Secretary of Defense—has, in its civilized humility, no equivalent today. Even the level of discord among Hollywood hotheads seems to have dimmed; when "Hearts and Minds" won the Academy Award for Best Documentary, in 1974, the film's producer, Bert Schneider, read out a wire from the Vietcong delegation then attending the Paris peace talks, and everybody went nuts. John Wayne went nuts. Shirley MacLaine went nuts, in the opposite direction. Bob Hope reportedly shoved the producer of the Oscars against a wall and demanded a public apology. Frank Sinatra went onstage and delivered it. Man, those were the days. ♦

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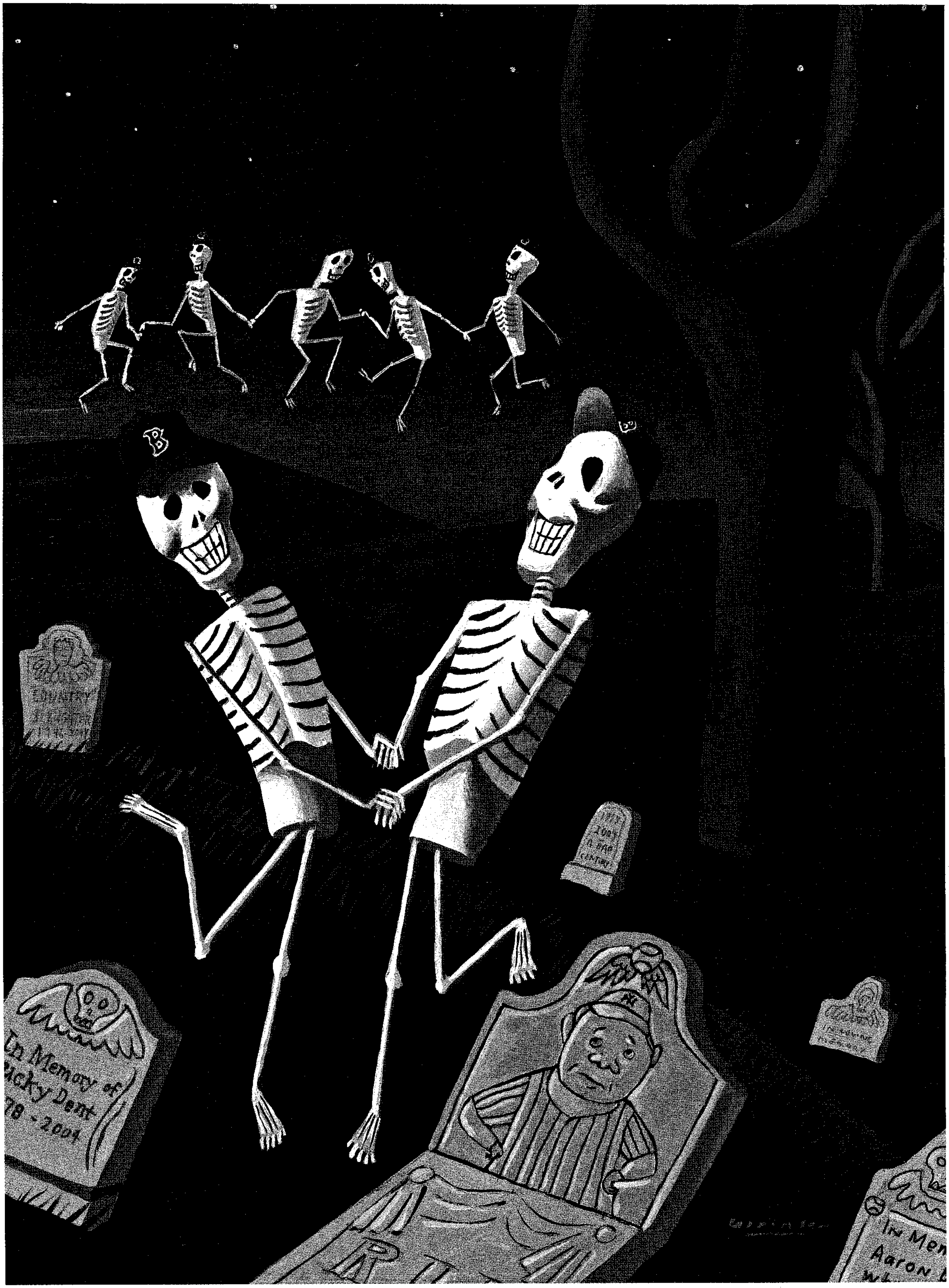
THE GRATEFUL DEAD BY MARK ULRIKSEN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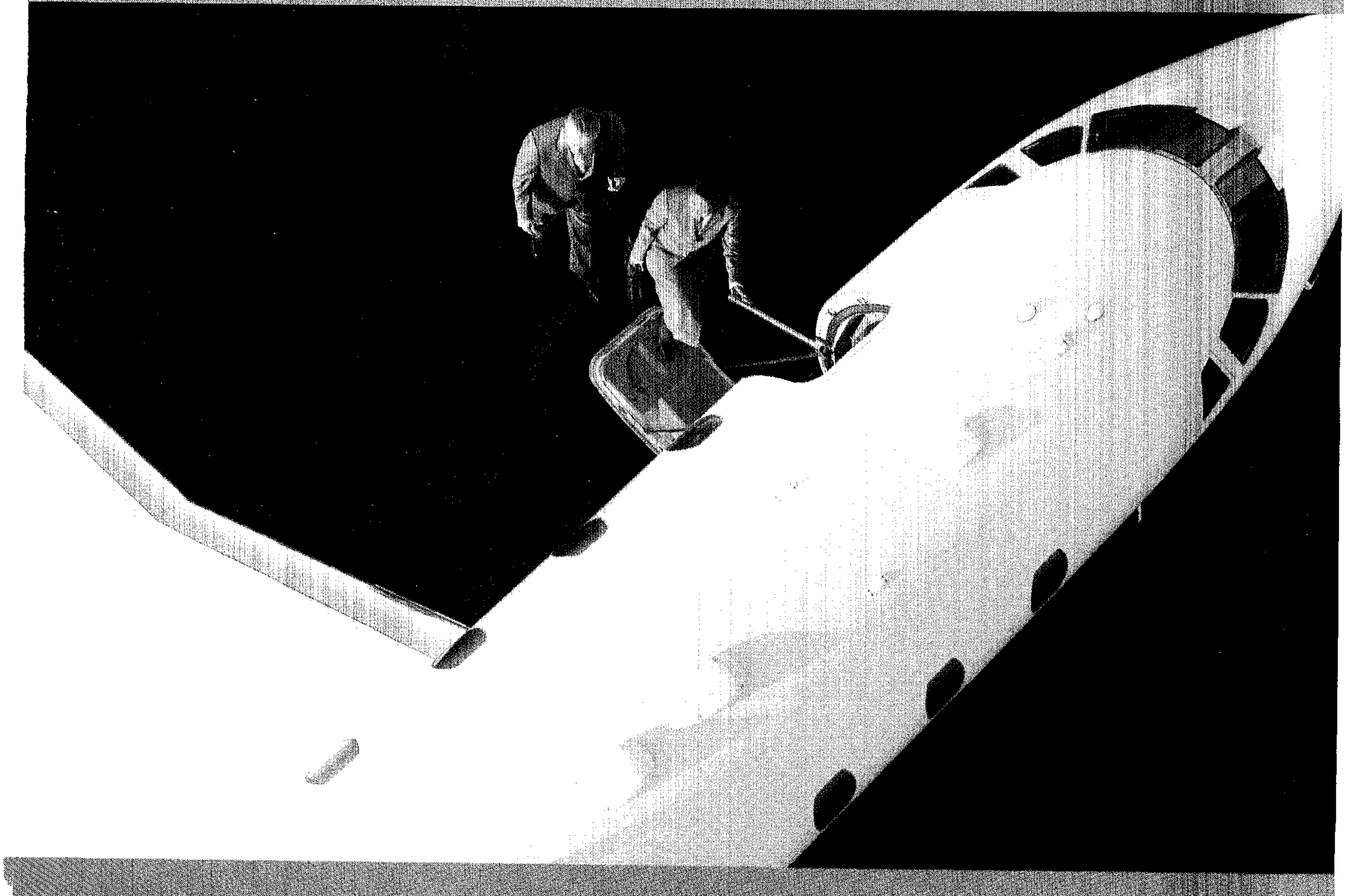

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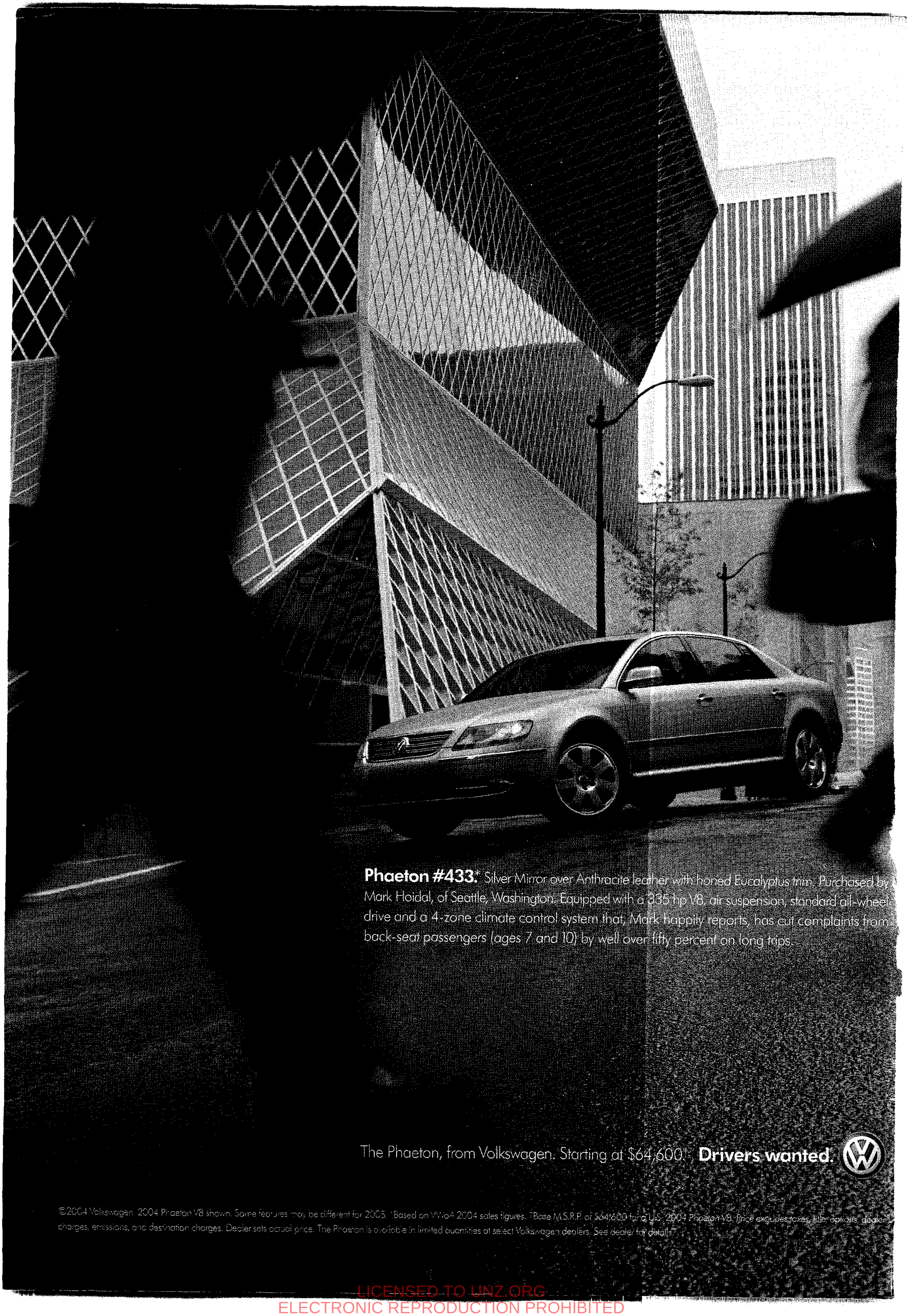

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